International Archival
Acquisition Program of the United
States Holocaust
Memorial Museum, Washington D.C.

Introduction to

Records of the Association of Victims of the Nazi regime (VVN)

(Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Nazi-Regimes)

at the German Federal Archives in Berlin.



January 8, 2009

Project Supervision: Dr. Klaus Müller Program Coordinator Europe United States Holocaust Memorial Museum kmueller@ushmm.org

Database and Project Implementation Facts & Files Historical Research Institute Berlin Drauschke – Schreiber Partnership Company Scholars in Archives, History and Literature Pestalozzistraße 38, D-13187 Berlin phone +49 30 / 4809 8620 www.factsandfiles.com contact: Beate Schreiber E-mail: schreiber@factsandfiles.com

Content

I. The Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN)	3
II. The holding of the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN) at the German Federal Archives, Berlin	the 4
III. Scope of the VVN Collection	5
A. Card Indexes	5
(1) ID-Cards (Kennkarten) and General Registration Cards (Volkskarteikarten) of German Jews	5
(2) Prison card index (Haftkartei) of the Secret State Police Berlin office 7 (Geheime Staatspolizei Gestapo Berlin Abteilung 710) from 1935 to 1937)	710
(3) Card indexes on concentration camps in Germany and the occupie territories	ed 9
(4) Card index of the prison Brandenburg (Zuchthaus Brandenburg) in Germany	10
(5) Card index on prison Berlin-Plötzensee (Zuchthaus Berlin-Plötzensee) Germany	in 10
B. Tracing papers, Questionnaires, Reports and Listings	11
IV. Finding Aid	12
A. Database	12
B. PDF-Document	14

January 8, 2009.

The Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN)

After the end of World War II, former victims of the Holocaust and the Nazi era organized themselves in committees called "Victims of Fascism" (Opfer des Faschismus) in Germany. These committees were responsible organizing accommodations and food supplements for survivors and were helping in their search for surviving family members. The most important committee was a sub-department of the city government of Berlin. Other committees were founded in the Soviet Occupied Zone in East Germany.

At the end of 1946, the committees decided to establish a political organization for victims of the Nazi era, the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes - VVN). In the Western zones, local associations were founded and in March 1947, the all German VVN Association was founded in Frankfurt am Main.

The VVN Association had 250,000 members in all zones. Mandate of the VVN Association was to represent the victims of the Nazi era, helping them with their daily needs, organizing political support for former victims and working nonpartisan in all occupation zones of Germany.

The VVN Association also collected documentation and records about Nazi persecution and established a special department for that task. The VVN Association had an investigation service unit to trace Nazi criminals.

As the Cold War began, the Soviet Union started to put a lot of pressure on so-called heretics ("Abweichler") in her satellite countries. The Soviets and the East German communists gained more and more control of the VVN Association.

One of the most important topics among the VVN Association members was the question of restitution of property or compensation for persecution and looted assets ("Wiedergutmachung"). The often postulated demand for restitution and an all German representation aroused suspicion with the Soviets and the East German communists. Restitution of companies or real estate to private persons, mostly now living in Western countries, ran counter to the Communist idea of property of the people (Volkseigentum).

After 1949, Anti-Semitism got stronger in East German politics, especially in the communist party. Some Jewish members and leaders of the VVN Association were persecuted due to Stalinist politics. In 1951, the Czech communist Rudolf Slánský, vice premier of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, was arrested and accused to be a Zionist agent. In the aftermath of the trial against Slánský and 13 other East German communists accused the Jewish members of the VVN Association to be Zionists and spies commissioned by Western agencies. In November 1952, Slánský was sentenced to death, and the Slánský-Trial provided for big propaganda in Eastern European media. After many important Jewish members of the VVN Association escaped to West Germany, the VVN Association came completely under communist control. On January 15, 1953 the VVN Association was closed down in East Germany and the communist party created its own organization of "antifascist resistance fighters".

January 8, 2009.

II. The holding of the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime (VVN) at the German Federal Archives, Berlin

The holding of the VVN Association at the German Federal Archives consists of two record groups. (Record Groups DY 55 and DY54)

After the VVN Association was closed in the beginning of 1953, some files were given to the archive of the communist party, the Socialist United Party (SED) in the GDR. Others were transferred to the East German Ministry of State Security (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit).

After the reunification of Germany in 1990, all records were transferred to the German Federal Archives in Berlin.

The holding at the German Federal Archives contains over 3,500 files. It consists of two main groups of files: (a) administrational files of the VVN association and (b) reports, minutes, biographical collections of victims of the Nazi era, and material on the persecution during the Nazi era. This material came from the VVN Association investigation service unit. This unit traced Nazi's, who committed crimes in Nazi Germany, concentration and extermination camp and were members of the Secret State Police (Gestapo). Among them were also "ordinary Germans" who denounced their Jewish neighbors or "aryanized" Jewish property. The VVN Association investigation service unit collected a large documentation on concentration camps, ghettos, the Gestapo and the Nazi regime. The unit also sent out questionnaires to survivors to learn more about their fate during the Nazi time. The research staff also collected material on concentration camps, prisons and probation units in the German Army (Wehrmacht).

The collection contains also material on the Gestapo in Breslau (Silesia), concentration camp personnel, lists of Jewish victims, the murder of mentally retarded people (Euthanasia) and Greek prisoner of war.

The Berlin and other sub-branches in the other East German states collected material with a regional focus, such as on the regional head of the NSDAP at Görlitz, Bruno Malitz and the persecution of Jews. Bruno Malitz was responsible for "Aryanization" of Jewish business in Görlitz and the deportation and slave labor of Jews.

January 8, 2009.

III. Scope of the VVN Collection

The holding was surveyed on Holocaust related materials for the archival collection of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with a special focus on the documentation on victims, camps and Nazi crimes.

The selected material is most relevant to the USHMM archives. It documents personal recollections of victims, witness reports, lists of victims and several card indexes on Jews, prisoners and camps.

183 relevant files out of over 3,500 were microfilmed. 69 microfilm reels are now available at the USHMM archives.

The microfilmed material consists of two different groups which are described in the following chapters.

A. Card Indexes

There are five different card indexes:

- (1) ID-Cards (Kennkarten) and the often corresponding general registration cards (Volkskarteikarte) of German Jews.
- (2) Prison card index (Haftkartei) of the Secret State Police Berlin office 710 (Geheime Staatspolizei Gestapo Berlin Abteilung 710) from 1935 to 1937).
- (3) Card index on concentration camps in Germany and the occupied territories. Post-war card index.
- (4) Card index of the prison Brandenburg (Zuchthaus Brandenburg) in Nazi Germany. Card index on prison Berlin-Plötzensee (Zuchthaus Berlin-Plötzensee) in Nazi Germany.

(1) ID-Cards (Kennkarten) and General Registration Cards (Volkskarteikarten) of German Jews

Identity cards (Kennkarten) were introduced in Germany in 1938. From January 1, 1939 Jews were forced to carry this card with them at all the time. With the beginning of the war, all Germans over 15 years had to carry an ID-card. The cards for Jews had a capital letter "J" printed on the card. From then on all people in Germany had to register at the police, whenever they moved from one place to another or stayed somewhere for a longer period of time.

In addition to the ID-cards, a national card index (Volkskartei) was introduced in 1939. This was a registry kept at the local police office in charge of registration. An ID-Card was always issued in two complete copies. One copy was handed out to the person and the other copy was kept with the corresponding card of the national

January 8, 2009.

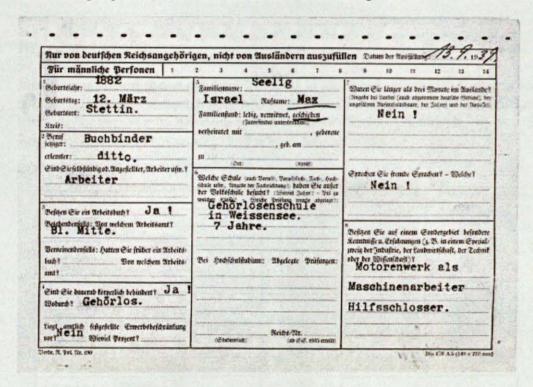
card index The ID card recorded personal and professional information and gave information about the racial background of the person. The police registered who was a Jew, half-Jew or a gypsy.

This collection of Jewish ID- and registration cards on 891 people is a unique source for biographical research and often gives information about the fate of the person.

The following three examples show how these cards are preserved and what information they could deliver.

Example Cards from the file DY 55 V 278-5-4 vol. 1, Microfilm reel number 11

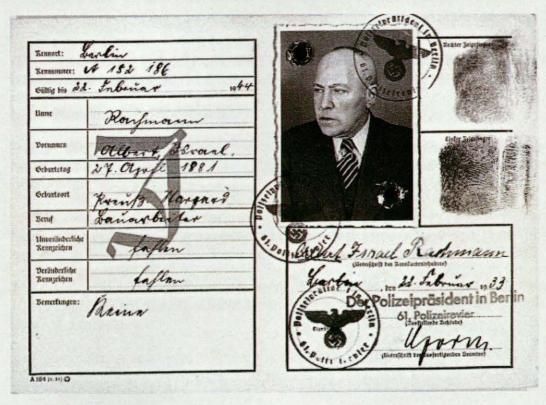
Max Seelig, born on March 12, 1882 in Stettin. Max Seeling was deaf. According to the information given from the memorial book, published by the German Federal Archives, he was deported to Theresienstadt on February 9, 1944 and later to Auschwitz where he perished. The card gives information about his education, civil status, and his descendents. An entry from the census in 1939 conveys the information that all of Max Seelig's grandparents were Jewish according to the Nazi racial laws.



January 8, 2009.

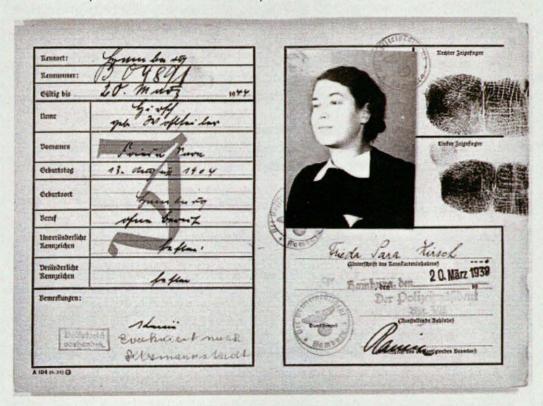
Befiten Gie befendere Bertig	feiden, wie Motocrabe, S	troftfabren Birmittent, Fliegen Bus.	nagimentana", Neiten? Nein
Sind Sie im Canitatedienst Gind Gie Mitglied ber Ded		n Tuitions ausschilder Nein Katen Arenjest	! Nein !
10 Dienstheit in heer, Marine v Lehter Ernroenteil:	der Luftmaffe von	bis Leiter Diensterad:	Gegebesenistis Schrummer:
Weren Gie im Neichsarbeits	Dienst Beis	bentenfellé; von bis	
19 Allebuset (Ale geliczt poliycil Arcie:	id gemeldert): Ber Als Wieter?	lin N.54 Ensign	Grenadierstr. Mr. 19 , Stedisoff: II
Steel für le	heerkahen Cuttragang ve	m Bohnungsseränderungen frei	Namı für behirtdide Bennerle H jüd. Gre. it. Volksz. 1939 M. fils. A U39909
		•	
and the second second			

Albert Rachmann, born on April 27, 1881 in Stargard. Albert Rachmann lived in Berlin and was working as construction worker. According to the information given from the memorial book, published by the German Federal Archives, he was deported to Auschwitz on November 29, 1942 where he perished.



January 8, 2009.

Ilse Hirsch, née Wohlfeiler, born on August 13, 1904 in Hamburg. She lived in Hamburg. According to the information given from the memorial book, published by the German Federal Archives, she was deported to Litzmannstadt on October 25, 1941 where she perished in 1942. Her deportation is noted on the card.



(2) Prison card index (Haftkartei) of the Secret State Police Berlin office 710 (Geheime Staatspolizei Gestapo Berlin Abteilung 710) from 1935 to 1937)

Microfilmed on Reel number 67.

These cards are unique contemporary Nazi era material from the Secret State Police Berlin office 710 (Geheime Staatspolizei Gestapo Berlin Abteilung 710) on political and Jewish prisoners.

By late 1934, Heinrich Himmler and his deputy, SD chief Reinhard Heydrich, had centralized the regional German political police departments within a single new agency in Berlin, the Secret State Police (Geheime Staatspolizei - Gestapo).

The cards give information on prisoners of the Secret State Police Berlin office 710 (Geheime Staatspolizei Gestapo Berlin Abteilung 710), names, dates of birth, occasion for arresting.

January 8, 2009.

(3) Card indexes on concentration camps in Germany and the occupied territories

The group is organized by main camps and lists all information on the structure, transports, and sub camps.

These files are microfilmed on the Micro film reels number 32, 60 to 69.

The card index was created by the VVN Association investigation service unit and is a compendium from different contemporary sources.

The cards give information on incidents in the camps, attempts of escape, shootings of prisoners, names of the camp personnel, the amount of prisoners, their origin (POW's, political prisoners) and transports from one camp to another.

Example Cards

3

Küstrin ehem. Kr. Königsberg, jetzt Polen

Akdo Sachsenhausen, "Arbeitslager Fasterweide "(BNTB zuerst erwähnt am 17'5.43 mit 30 Häftlingen.
(Sachsenhausen Tagesstärkebericht)

Bd I S 344

January 8, 2009.

Mauthausen Supreschille 1939

27. 128. Egot. - Transport mit vorwugerd Palet aus Dackau. Seit dutem Zeitpenalt trabaldis, Polit. übermigerd.

Uberlichnik - 250 rum - Febr. 1940 nud Vachan zumih

Whiter 1939/40 start lages feut völlit aus.

31. Dezember - Emi Freitog NPD erschonen.

(4) Card index of the prison Brandenburg (Zuchthaus Brandenburg) in Germany

One card index is on prisoners of the prison Brandenburg (Zuchthaus Brandenburg), in alphabetical order.

Only the letters from A to K are preserved (Microfilm reel 66). This index lists the names of prisoners who were arrested and perished in the prison (Zuchthaus) Brandenburg. Alphabetical entries include birthdates and the date the individual was murdered or sentenced to a prison term. Many of those listed were participants or accused participants in the failed assassination attempt of Adolf Hitler of July 20, 1944.

(5) Card index on prison Berlin-Plötzensee (Zuchthaus Berlin-Plötzensee) in Germany

Another index is on prisoners of the prison Plötzensee-Berlin (Zuchthaus Plötzensee-Berlin) (Microfilm reel number 68-69), in alphabetical order.

Only family names of prisoners starting with C to Z are preserved. The prison Plötzensee-Berlin became one of the most important prisons for political prisoners during the Nazi era. Over 2,800 persons were executed there.

January 8, 2009.

E

B. Tracing papers, Questionnaires, Reports and Listings

Apart from the card indexes the USHMM project focused on other Holocaust relevant material containing personal reports, biographical information on the victims and persecutors who were traced by the VVN Association after the war.

To support the research at the USHMM archives a database was created. We registered the names of victims listed on post-war documentation by the VVN Association and those, which are mentioned in correspondences. All together 1,981 names of Jews, Communists, Social Democrats and other opponents are now listed in the finding aid.

The VVN Association also investigated on crimes relating to euthanasia and sterilization. For instance, there were investigations against the Madaus Company in Dresden, which developed a medicine for sterilization. The Madaus Company forced tests upon prisoners from the concentration camp Buchenwald (Konzentrationslager Buchenwald). The VVN Association collected reports on victims of Nazi euthanasia and sterilization programs.

Other reports and material concern abuse of Jewish prisoners in concentration camps, sub-camps and slave labor camps.

The material also contains documents on the denunciations of Jews. The famous illustrator E.O. Plauen (Kurt Erich Ohser) (1904-1944) was betrayed by neighbors in Berlin arrested and committed suicide in prison. The VVN Association investigated the denunciation and tracked down former denouncers.

To be recognized as a former victim of the Nazi Regime former prisoners had to document their persecution. The VVN Association prepared questionnaires. They are now part of the VVN collection, organized by state.

The names of the victims are registered in the finding aid.

January 8, 2009.

IV. Finding Aid

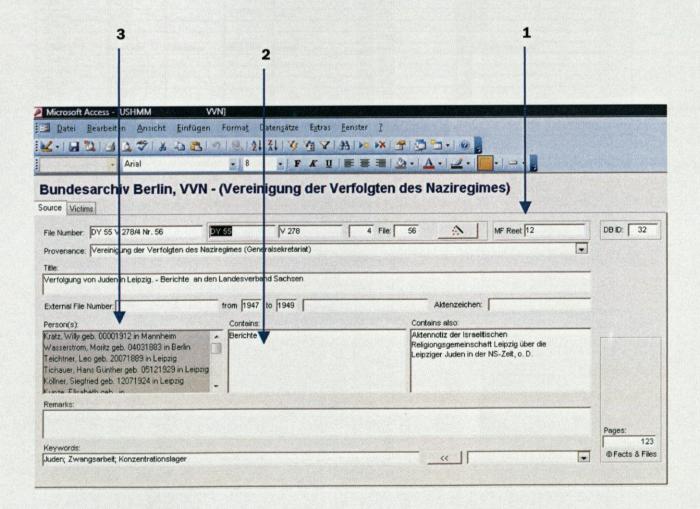
The finding aid consists of an MsAccess database and a PDF-document.

A. Database

The database provides for each data set two forms. The first form gives general information of the data set, mainly about the source (file) and the general content, the second form behind lists the victims, which are included in the file, stating the personal information to each person.

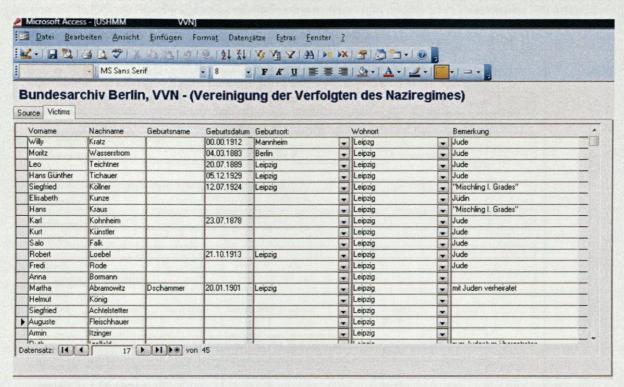
The following screen shot shows the first form. It shows the name of the holding, file number, file title, and new edited information like USHMM Archives microfilm reel number (see arrow 1) and content description (see arrow 2).

One field lists the name(s) of the registered people (see arrow 3).



January 8, 2009.

The next Screen shot shows the second form showing all people included in this file in the form of a table.



January 8, 2009.

B. PDF-Document

In the PDF-Document includes all fields from the database in a print form. By searching the PDF-document, it is possible to have a full-text search through all fields at the same time.

lie Number:	DY 54 V 277/1 Nr. 1		MFF	ieet 4	Pages:	203	DB ID:	1
rovenance:	Ausschüsse Opfer d	les Faschismus						
te: Ermittiu	ingen wegen Euthana	sie- und Sterilisati	lonsverbrechen				in it	
stemai File N				948	7 141	enzelchen:		
						_		
entains: erichte, Antră	ige und Anfragen zur	Anerkennung als	Opfer des Faschis	mus	EUROS EN PROPERTO DE COMP	30.625-000.00		
ontains also:								
the state of the s	egen die Firma Mada	ius & Co. Dresden	Radebeul wegen	Versuchen an Häfting	jen im KZ Buchenwal	d mit medizinisc	hen Prå	arater
emarks:								
eywords:								
	sarbelt; Euthanasie							
Person(s):					Maker			
Vomame Willy	Nachname Abramowioz	Geburtsname	Geburtsdatum	Geconsor:	Wohnort Berlin	Blackground		
Bemertung:		tz, Anfang 1940 na	ach Eberswalde ve	riegt, dort verstorben				
Slegfried	Abramowioz		na managama	TANGET SHEET	Berlin	CONTRACTOR OF THE STATE OF THE		
Bemerkung:	Jude, nach Auschw	itz deportiert. Ober	riebt					
	Abramowicz			ones region outrane	Berlin			
Henriette Bemerkung:	Jodin, 1939/40 Ansi	tait Buch, you doc	verlegt, vermisst				\neg	
	Abramowioz			Seneral Constitution	Berlin			
Hermann	Jude, 1942 nach Th	peresienstadt dess	rtiert					
Bemerkung:				Entra and a secretary	Berlin		=	
Auguste Bemerkung:	Abramowicz Jūdin, 1942 nach Ti	heresienstadt den	ortiert					
Control of the State				. Difference and resource	le.de		2535	
Cacile	Alexander	Kaufmann nd Ofennanstall			Berlin			
Bemerkung:		and rine years lab t		Vakreske	unbekar		=	
Nivica	Bajlo		11.05.1925	Obrawalde verlegt und				
Bemerkung:		on wittenauer Hei	- Ankat (-C. Jacobe Verley, Unit			=	
	Frau) Balder		des (Bernaul) and		Berlin			
Bemerkung:	none personal constraint	excension or, we	ner (permau) verse					
Elsabeth	Belike				Berlin		=	
Bemerkung:		nung als Opfer de	r Aumberger Gest	a pecury			=	
Franz	Berger		NO BENEFIT OF		Berlin			
Bemerkung:	1940 aus der Ansta	et Wuhigarten b. B	lesdorf in Landesa	nstalt Linz verlegt, do				
Gertrud	Böhme			UPSE STORES OF STREET	Berlin		=	
Bemerkung:	Anstall Wuhlgarten,		et Sonnenstein ver	legt und dort verstorb			-	
Ele	Böhme				Sertin			
Bemerkung:	Anstalt Wuhlgarten	, 1940 in die Ansta	it Sonnenstein ver	legt und dort verstort	xan			
Frieda	Bridde				unbekar	net population		
Bemerkung:	1939-1940 Anstalt (Neuruppin (dort ve	rstorben					
unbekannt (Frau) Bronkmann			CONTRACTOR OF THE CONTRACTOR	Berlin			
STEEL CONTRACTOR OF THE PARTY O	1933-1938 Anstalt I	Neuruppin	1988 (0.88)					
Bemerkung:	Comments of the Comments of th		THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF T					