

Jasenovac - “The Auschwitz of the Balkans”

Serbian Association of Norway’s 1st Conference on Jasenovac concentration camp
with professor Gideon Greif, Knut Flovik Thoresen and Karina Cheshuiko

5.2.2021 | 17:00h CET

Link: <https://youtu.be/UC5nrm5w3kA>

The 27th of January, the day of the liberation of Auschwitz, was chosen by the UN for International Holocaust Remembrance Day. As part of this annual observance, the Serbian Association of Norway will be commemorating the hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Roma and others, the innocent victims of Jasenovac and other death camps of the Nazi Ustaša-regime.

We wish to make the Norwegian and international public more aware of this little-known chapter of the 2nd World War, by presenting prof. Gideon Greif’s book, “Jasenovac, Auschwitz of the Balkans”. Professor Greif will be accompanied by the Lithuanian theatre regisseur, Karina Cheshuiko, who has been working with this in an artistic way, and the Norwegian historian, Knut Flovik Thoresen, who has 14 publications and books about military history and World War II.



Stone Flower at Jasenovac - Sculpture by Bogdan Bogdanović
Photo: Bern Bartsch



Honoring the victims of Jasenovac

This conference aims to honor the memory of the victims at Jasenovac, which was the largest concentration camp in Europe not operated by German Nazis. It had 700.000 victims, and was the third largest concentration camp in Europe, in terms of the numbers killed. Only Auschwitz and Treblinka had more. But in terms of the horrors and cruelty towards the innocent victims, it is unparalleled in human history. In its special camp for children alone, more than 20.000 children were killed; meanwhile 366.000 other prisoners of Jasenovac, were liquidated at nearby Donja Gradina.

75 years on and still the souls of the innocent victims of Jasenovac haunt the Balkan hills. The right words and time to properly heal the griefs and sorrows has not been granted; thus many of them have never found their rest. Those sorrows are passed from generation to generation, reviving the old wounds of the dead. Sadly, the grief often only meets silence and omissions from historical maps.

The Serbian Association of Norway wishes to honor these seldom-heard victims; let them get the opportunity to address an international audience; help them find rest on the Balkan hillside. We wish to pave the way for new generations who, through a culture of remembrance, may learn tackle the sorrows of the past in an honorable and peaceful manner.





700 000

Victims of the Nazi Ustaša-regime
at Jasenovac concentration camp

Prof. Greif published recently the book “Jasenovac - Auschwitz of the Balkans”. It is one volume of a Trilogy by Prof. Greif, dedicated to the crimes of the Nazi-Ustasha Regime against the Serbian, Jewish and Roma people during World War two. All three Volumes of the Trilogy, the rest to be published soon, contain more than 2500 pages.

Prof. Greif’s book “We Wept without Tears” inspired the Hungarian movie “Son of Saul”, which won an Oscar in 2016. Gideon Greif worked as a historical advisor for the film.



Prof. Gideon Greif

Prof. Gideon Greif is an Israeli historian, educator and pedagogue. He is Chief Historian and Researcher at the “Shem Olam” Institute for Education, Documentation and Research on Faith and the Holocaust, Israel, Chief Historian and Researcher at the Foundation for Holocaust Education Projects in Miami, Florida and a senior Researcher and Historian at the Ono Academic College in Israel.

Professor Gideon Greif is considered one of the world-renowned historians who are experts on the history of the Extermination Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. His most famous contribution to the history of Auschwitz is “We Wept without Tears”, his pioneering and groundbreaking research on the history of the “Sonderkommando”, a special Jewish squad of prisoner in Auschwitz-Birkenau, that was compelled to work at the mass-extermination installations. His research, first published at Yad Vashem, has become an international best seller and his book has so far been translated into 12 languages.



Knut Flovik Thoresen

Knut Flovik Thoresen is a Norwegian author and historian, he has worked for various institutions and projects. He also has a military background as an officer from the Norwegian Armed Forces, and has served in several countries including Balkans, Middle East and Afghanistan. He also worked for OSCE in Ukraine in 2015. He has 14 literary publications with military history and World War II as his theme. The book “Sent To Norway to die” (the original title “Til Norge for å dø”) about the Serbian prisoner Nikola Rokic has been translated into Serbian with the title “У Норвешку, у смрт”, and was published in Serbia in 2015.



Karina Cheshuiko

Karina Cheshuiko was born in 1984 in Kaunas, Lithuania. She graduated from Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (VGIK, Moscow) in 2007. She performed in the “Center for Drama and Directing Theatre”, conducted her own TV show at the Moscow television channel “Zhyvi”, taught stage speech and worked with the voice at the Institute of Cinematography. She conducts voice seminars in Russia and Europe.

She teaches at the Vytautas Magnus University (the Faculty of Acting and the Faculty of Theater Pedagogy). Together with graduates of the Acting faculty she is establishing their own theater, and now they are working on a vocal performance reflecting the fusion of Serbian and Lithuanian culture.

She has cooperated with Serbian director and writer, Simo Brdar, and is producer and consultant for several of his films. They have received 9 awards at international film festivals, one of them being “The Cross made of Blood” about the tragic fate of brothers Banjac, Marijan and Milos, and their suffering in a Nazi concentration camp in Norway during World War II.

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