

“Contemporary Witnesses of Police Brutality and Forced Labour in World War II”

International Digital Study- and Workcamp with Augustaschacht Memorial
(23.10. – 07.11.2020)

In the Osnabrück region in Lower Saxony/Germany, there are two places of remembrance which are closely connected and form a unique ensemble with special and diverse learning opportunities due to their historical connection under National Socialism: The Gestapokeller Memorial in cells of the former Secret State Police (Gestapo) in the city of Osnabrück, and the Augustaschacht Memorial in buildings of the former Ohrbeck Labour Education Camp (AEL) in Hasbergen/Osnabrück district.

The Project:

For many years, SCI and the Memorials have been conducting regular Study- and Workcamps at the historical place with young international volunteers. Volunteers have the opportunity to make visible the stories of the often forgotten millions of forced labourers and the hundreds of thousands of AEL prisoners. In earlier Study-/Workcamps, this has been achieved through archaeological-documentary activities. This year, on occasion of the 75th anniversary of the end of National Socialism and the war in Europe, the cooperation has been redesigned in a special way. Volunteers have the opportunity to interact with international participants online, to contribute to historical-biographical work and to take part in virtual tours through the memorials and exhibitions. Using a selected biography, the volunteers will deal with forced labour and Nazi history as well as its causes and consequences. This year, the focus is on a contemporary witness interview with a forced labourer who experienced war and the Holocaust. In addition, participants will have the opportunity to exchange different historical perspectives and cultures of remembrance as well as to communicate about references to the present.



Historical Background:

The Gestapo office Osnabrück instructed the prisoners in the AEL Ohrbeck and determined their living conditions. From January 1944 until the end of the war, more than 2,000 men, including numerous people from the Netherlands and the former Soviet Union, were imprisoned in AEL

Ohrbeck. Most of them were forced labourers who had either attempted to flee or whose work performance was considered 'insufficient'. Their punishment served as a deterrent for over 30,000 forced labourers in the Osnabrück region, 38% of whom from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. In addition to systematically poor care at the AEL, the men were forced to work at worst places. Many lost their lives in Gestapo custody.

Volunteers' tasks:

The volunteers work together online to prepare the story of a Ukrainian prisoner of AEL. They each write text fragments of a biographical interview with the former forced labourer, help with translations where possible, put the fragments together, put them in relation with historical context which they researched, and thus jointly trace the biography of this person in order to preserve it for the future. The joint project of the volunteers will be included in the memorial's exhibition and thus serve further documentary and educational purposes.

Structure of the project:

The participants meet in virtual spaces on a regular daily basis. A Digital Workcamp puts emphasis on community and a strong cohesiveness of the group in addition to joint volunteer work and historical learning. Through such international encounters, SCI has made an important contribution to understanding and peace work during the last 100 years. For this reason there will be an extensive group-finding phase at the beginning of the project to get to know each other, clarify expectations, wishes and suggestions, gather individual knowledge and create a sense of community.

During the course of the project, the group will meet for one hour each day in the digital space, exchange information about the work and discuss and reflect on perspectives on the prisoner's biography and the participants' own references to it. Afterwards, there will be optional consultation hours with members of the team for specific questions, provision of technical support, etc. Participants are very welcome to share their own expertise with the rest of the group.

In addition to the meetings within the group, participants work individually or in small teams on transcription, translation or research tasks according to their individual abilities. On weekends, there are several longer blocks in which we work together in greater depth, go on a virtual tour of the memorials, etc.

In addition to the daily program, participants have the opportunity to participate in an optional accompanying program.

Requirements:

Equipment with tablet/computer and/or smartphone, and stable internet connection; willingness to work several hours a day on the PC for two weeks and to participate in digital meetings about 1-2 times a day; good written & spoken English skills; knowledge of Ukrainian or Russian is an advantage, but not a requirement. Knowledge of the usual office software is also necessary; experience with transcription software is highly appreciated.

Please bring sensitivity for the memorial theme and interest in historical different historical perspectives and cultures of remembrance as well as an understanding of today's challenges. Please make sure that you'll be able to participate for the whole duration of the project.



Organisational Questions:

Please register via <https://workcamps.sci.ngo/icamps/camp-details/camp-14415.html>

For further information please contact the SCI at incoming@sci-d.de or call +49 228 21 20 87.

The placement fee for the 14-day project is 30,-EUR for participants from Germany. This should be transferred to the SCI in advance. International participants please check the exact amount with your sending office.

All questions concerning the program will be answered by Margarete Zimmermann (Augustaschacht Memorial):

margarete.zimmermann@augustaschacht.de, Tel. +49 (0) 5405 8959270.

Volunteers will be accompanied by a highly qualified team of SCI and Augustaschacht Memorial volunteers, historians/historical educators and a project consultant, who will guide you through the whole process. The SCI group leader will get in touch with you in advance.

Detailed information on the history and present of the Augustaschacht and Gestapokeller Memorials can be found here: <http://www.gedenkstaetten-augustaschacht-osnabrueck.de/Index/> and on SCI Germany here: <https://www.sci-d.de/english>.

Many greetings,

The Organising Team