

Handout for educators

Pedagogical materials to accompany the visit to the  
**Shoah Wall of Names Memorial**  
with school classes and youth groups

A cooperation project of the OeAD and the National Fund  
of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism



Photo: National Fund, Peter Stadlbaumer

# 1

## Information on the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial

**The Shoah Wall of Names Memorial is a memorial site commemorating the Jewish children, women and men from Austria who were murdered in the Shoah.**

On the initiative of the Austrian Holocaust survivor Kurt Yakov Tutter, the implementation of the memorial began in the commemorative year 2018.

**Kurt Yakov Tutter** was born in Vienna in 1930. In 1939 he fled with his family to Belgium. His parents were deported from Brussels to Auschwitz in 1942 and murdered. Kurt and his younger sister Rita survived the Holocaust with the help of a Belgian family. Kurt Tutter emigrated to Canada in 1948 and has lived in Toronto ever since.

The memorial is located on a green area in front of the Austrian National Bank, the "**Ostarrichi Park**", in the 9th district. The memorial consists of around 160 oval stone walls engraved with the names and years of birth of the Jewish victims of the Shoah.

The names and dates of the Shoah victims, which can be found in alphabetical order on the stone walls, are based on research by the "Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance". Since 1992, the Documentation Centre has been recording biographical data and circumstances of death of Austrian Shoah victims. Research on the fates of the victims has not yet been completed. Even after the opening of the memorial, relatives and descendants from Germany and abroad continue to contact the documentation archive with information about their ancestors. Subsequently researched names are added annually on a stone wall at the end of the alphabetical order.

At the entrance to the memorial, there is a stone wall that expresses the dedication of the memorial:

**"In memory of the more than 65,000 Jewish children, women and men from Austria who were murdered between 1938 and 1945. They were persecuted, ridiculed, robbed, tormented and deported to ghettos and extermination camps by National Socialists and their supporters. Numerous Austrians took part in this mass murder."**

Another stone wall opposite the entrance to the memorial commemorates all other groups of victims and persecutees of National Socialism:

“The Nazi regime and its numerous supporters persecuted, tortured and killed hundreds of thousands of people from Austria. Among the victims were Jewish children, women and men, members of the Roma and Sinti of all ages, children and adults who were considered mentally or physically handicapped, people who were ostracised as “asocials” or persecuted because of their sexual orientation, and Carinthian Slovenes.

In addition, thousands of political opponents were persecuted and murdered, as were men who tried to evade service in the German Wehrmacht. We remember these Austrian persecutees as well as all those who suffered as foreigners on the territory of today's Austria and lost their lives in their tens of thousands: The concentration camp prisoners and prisoners of war as well as the more than one million deportees who had to do forced labour here.”

The construction of the memorial was financed by the federal government, the federal states and by donations from industry and business.

On 9 November 2021, the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial was ceremonially inaugurated in the presence of Federal Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg, Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler, National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka, City Councillor for Culture Veronica Kaup-Hasler, the President of the Jewish Community Oskar Deutsch and the initiator and Holocaust survivor Kurt Yakov Tutter.

Due to the historical significance of the memorial, the City of Vienna and the National Fund of the Republic of Austria are responsible for the maintenance and ongoing operation of the memorial.

“The Shoah Wall of Names Memorial is a place with great evocative power: Standing in the wide oval of the granite tablets, surrounded by the almost 65,000 names engraved on them, one can only imagine the enormous loss that the Holocaust brought with it: The stone steles make every single victim visible, every single name tangible. The sheer numbers will always be intangible. The names, however, reach the hearts. It is a powerful reminder never to allow such crimes to happen again.”

Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism

**Source and further information:**

[www.nationalfonds.org/shoah-namensmauern-gedenkstaette](http://www.nationalfonds.org/shoah-namensmauern-gedenkstaette)

# 2.

## Mediation Programme “The Shoah Wall of Names Memorial Site in Vienna”

The Shoah Wall of Names impresses young people as much as adults with its scale. At the same time, it requires contextualisation and the addition of individual fates. Therefore, the OeAD programme ERINNERN:AT, together with the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, provides a low-threshold mediation offer with biographical access for school classes and youth groups. This can be done independently by educators.

### TARGET GROUPS

The unit is designed for youth groups as well as pupils from the 8th grade upwards.

### DURATION

one to one and a half hours

### CONTENT OF THE PEDAGOGICAL UNIT

The material consists of **14 biographical cards** of Austrians murdered in the Shoah (families, couples or individuals). The authors have made sure that they come from different walks of life, are of different ages, genders and backgrounds. In addition to biographical data, the biographies also contain information on the time before 1938. The most important places where Austrian Jews were murdered by the National Socialists are also mentioned during the tour.

The material is supplemented by

- + a copy of the work assignment
- + large-format pictures for the biography cards as copy templates for the joint tour
- + a glossary, which is also available online.

### Methodical implementation

In groups of two or three, the young people each receive a biography card with a corresponding picture and the following tasks and instructions (also available as a copy template).

**The preparation time in small groups takes about 10 – 15 minutes:**

- + First look for the name(s) of your person(s) on the Shoah Wall of Names.
- + Read the card carefully.

Later you will briefly introduce the person or persons to the whole group:

- + Share the places of birth, the life before the so-called “Anschluss” and the places of murder with the group.
- + Agree on two or three points that you think are particularly important, interesting or noteworthy and that you would also like to present.
- + If you have questions about terms or places, there is a glossary for reference, which you can either get from your teacher or find online under the following QR code.



The subsequent tour is best done alphabetically. The young people can be invited to ask the presenters questions:

Alfred Barth – Dr. David Blatt – Elfriede, Mosche (Moritz), Charlotte, Geza and Ella Frischmann – Agathe and Olga Kronberger – Dr. Käthe Leichter - Ruth, Rachel and Walter Lindenbaum – Eva, Hedy and Leon Linker – Thekla and Dr. Magda Merwin – Frieda (Friederike) Nossig – Hans Wolfgang, Valerie and Ing. Moritz Pollak – Lea and Pinkas Rennert – Jura Soyfer – Hans, Katharina and Erwin Steiner – Edith, Mirjam and Philipp Winkler

### Follow-up on site

Dealing with the biographies, which all deal with persecution and death, can have a strong emotionalising effect on some young people. Therefore, a short final round is recommended to process the impressions of the young people together.

The following questions are suitable for this purpose:

- + How has your perception of the Shoah Wall of Names changed through your engagement with the biographies?
- + What do you remember most? What impressed you the most?
- + Do you know of any other monuments and places that commemorate victims of the National Socialists? How do these differ from the Wall of Names Memorial?
- + What can each and every individual do for the memory of the victims of the Shoah?



Before or after visiting the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial, the tour for school classes “Life and Expulsion of the Jewish Population in Vienna” is recommended. This can be booked directly with the OeAD programme ERINNERN:AT.

# Shoah Wall of Names Memorial

## Work assignment for the biography cards

- + First look for the name(s) of your person(s) on the Shoah Wall of Names.
- + Read the card carefully.

Later you will briefly introduce the person or persons to the whole group:

- + Share the places of birth, the life before the so-called “Anschluss” and the places of murder with the group.
- + Agree on two or three points that you think are particularly important, interesting or noteworthy and that you would also like to present.



If you have questions about terms or places, there is a glossary for reference, which you can either get from your teacher or find online under the following QR code.

# 3

## The National Socialist Persecution and Expulsion of Austrian Jews

With the “Anschluss” of Austria to the German Reich in March 1938, the massive National Socialist policy of persecution and expulsion begins, affecting political opponents, but especially Jews. The “Nuremberg Race Laws” determine who is “Jewish” according to racist criteria and thus belong to the group of the excluded and persecuted. In addition to the approximately 182,000 people registered with the “Jewish Communities” in Austria in March 1938 (over 90 percent live in Vienna), there are now approximately 24,000 more. These are people who converted to Christianity or were non-denominational, but were considered Jews according to the “racial laws” and were also affected by the persecution measures. The exclusion and disenfranchisement affects all areas of life. The humiliations and harassments take place publicly with the participation or acquiescence of the non-Jewish population, for example in the form of the “friction parties”. This participation was based not only on pure greed for booty, but also on anti-Semitism that was widespread in large parts of the population. Jewish schoolchildren also feel the hate, are ridiculed and later excluded from all schools. Occupational bans and the “Aryanisation” of flats and businesses are intended to deprive the Jewish population of their livelihood and induce them to “emigrate”. At the latest from the November pogrom in 1938, when the National Socialists destroyed synagogues, Jewish cemeteries and shops throughout the German Reich, Jews were also exposed to physical violence. In the days after 9/10 November, 3700 Jews from the Ostmark are deported to Dachau concentration camp.

The Jewish population reacts differently to the National Socialist persecution: While many try to flee, others remain in a state of shock, and quite a few are driven to suicide by hopelessness.

Jews are confronted with numerous hurdles in their search for escape options; many are unable to raise the necessary financial means. As late as 1938, the willingness to take in persecuted persons in the countries of refuge clearly diminishes. With “Kindertransports”, especially to Great Britain, and with the help of the “Children and Youth Aliyah” to Palestine, several thousand children are able to escape – separated from their parents. In total, around two thirds of Austria’s Jewish population are able to flee: About 70,000 of the approximately 130,000 Jews who fled and emigrated found refuge in European countries, about 30,000 in North America and about 15,000 in Palestine.

After the outbreak of war, the possibilities of escape are once again drastically reduced. The remaining Jews in Vienna are crammed into a few “collective flats”, from where they are deported and murdered from 1941 onwards, mainly via the Aspang railway station, which no longer exists today, to concentration and extermination camps and killing sites. More than 65,000 Austrian Jews were murdered in the Shoah.

See the chapter “The Genocide of the Jews”. In: Martin Krist/Albert Lichtblau: National Socialism in Vienna. Victims. Perpetrators. Opponents, Innsbruck-Vienna-Bolzano 2017, pp. 239-278.

Further: The introductory chapter by Manfred Mugrauer “Silent Heroes. Help for persecuted Jews in Austria”. In: Documentation Centre of the Austrian Resistance (ed.): We would not have tolerated the killing of people around us. Help for persecuted Jews in Austria 1938-1945, Berlin 2023, pp. 7-82.

# 4.

## Jewish commemoration of the dead – death and funeral rituals

No plantings are made or flowers laid on Jewish graves. As a memorial to the dead and as symbols of eternity, stones are placed on the grave instead. One aspect of this tradition refers to biblical times, when the Jewish people lived in the desert after fleeing from Egypt and continued to build and preserve the graves by laying stones as protection for the deceased from wild animals and other external influences. The stones also symbolise the memory of the dead and are thus intended to show that they will not be forgotten.

Remembering, “Sachor”, belongs to the core of Judaism. Mourning and commemoration, as well as remembering the names of the dead and the places of their burial, have been anchored in Jewish tradition for centuries. The industrial mass murder of Jews, the Shoah, represents a dramatic break. The Shoah Wall of Names Memorial therefore displays the names of those murdered and creates a place where they can be remembered.

In Judaism, the integrity of the corpse is considered a prerequisite for the resurrection, which is expected with the appearance of the Messiah. Caring for the dead is therefore a sacred task entrusted only to the most pious and worthy members of the community. This honorary task is taken over in the Jewish community by the “Chewra Kadischa”, the “Holy Brotherhood”. The deceased is carefully washed and ritually cleansed (“Tahara”), dressed in a white robe and placed in a simple and unadorned coffin. The funeral must take place within 24 hours of the death, but no later than three days. Exceptions are Shabbat, holidays or a postponement that honours the dead. These traditions could not be observed for all the people listed on the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial due to the circumstances of their murder. The cemetery is also one of the most important facilities of a Jewish community. It is treated with high respect like the dead themselves. In Hebrew, the cemetery is called “House of Graves” (“Beit Kwarot”), “House of Life” (“Beit Chajim”) or “House of Eternity” (“Beit Olam” or “Beit Olamin”). These terms refer to the mortality and transience of the human being or the belief in the continuation of life in eternity. The special thing about Jewish cemeteries is that they may no longer be used for any other purpose and the graves are to remain for eternity. Today, there are still almost 70 Jewish cemeteries in Austria, which have been repaired and maintained since 2010 with funds from the Republic of Austria and the local and Jewish communities due to their historical responsibility. Here too, the stones placed on the graves show that these people are remembered and not forgotten.



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