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## ARBEITSVORHABEN

### Auschwitz. A New History

I am writing a new history of Auschwitz, the biggest and deadliest camp in Nazi Germany. During World War Two, over one million men, women, and children were murdered here, the vast majority of them Jews. The camp existed for less than five years, following its establishment by the SS in occupied Poland in 1940. During this brief period, Auschwitz was never the same from one day to the next, reflecting dramatic changes in its function. Set up by the occupiers to subjugate the Polish population, it evolved into an enormous camp complex with multiple overlapping purposes, from slave labour for the German war effort to the Holocaust. Operating as both concentration camp and death camp, Auschwitz played a singular role in the Third Reich, and has become the “central metaphor for evil in our time” (Saul Friedländer). My book will offer a comprehensive history of the camp, using different levels of magnification. Viewing Auschwitz through a wide lens reveals the broader historical context, while microscopic lenses provide close-up views of those who lived and died here and of their immediate surroundings. To help us imagine the “unimaginable reality” of Auschwitz (as one inmate put it at the time), the study focuses on the lived experience of prisoners, perpetrators, and local onlookers. Drawing on a wide range of source materials and approaches, it aims to reconstruct essential elements of everyday life – including spaces, sights, sounds, and smells – as well as the daily routines that came to define the camp.

#### Recommended Reading

- Wachsmann, Nikolaus. *Hitler's Prisons: Legal Terror in Nazi Germany*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004.  
German: *Gefangen unter Hitler: Justizterror und Strafvollzug im NS-Staat*. Munich: Siedler, 2006.
- . *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*. London: Little, Brown; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.  
German: *KL: Die Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*. Munich: Siedler, 2016.
- . “Lived Experience and the Holocaust: Spaces, Senses and Emotions in Auschwitz.” *Journal of the British Academy* 9 (2021): 27–58.