

Arolsen Archives

International Center
on Nazi Persecution

Call for Applications (CfA)

Remote Access to the Arolsen Archives from Vienna: Researching Nazi Persecution, Forced Labour and Displaced Persons

Vienna, 6 November – 8 November 2019

The Arolsen Archives – International Center on Nazi Persecution (formerly the International Tracing Service, ITS) – hold the world's most comprehensive archive on the victims and survivors of National Socialism. Part of the institution's mission is to continually improve access to its collections, which are made up of well over 30 million documents pertaining to the Holocaust, Nazi concentration camps, forced labour during World War II, and the registration and care of Displaced Persons (DPs) in the post-war period. Furthermore, the archive holds more than three million post-war case files documenting the fates of individual Nazi victims (mainly correspondence with enquirers). By now, over 85 per cent of the records have been digitised. Users can access a growing number of documents (albeit not the collections in their entirety) in a new online archive that the Arolsen Archives launched in May 2019.

For more information about the institution and its holdings, please refer to the website of the Arolsen Archives at <https://arolsen-archives.org/en/>.

During the last years of his life, Simon Wiesenthal was particularly eager to make his personal archive, which had grown out of his many years of work, accessible to research. He wanted the documents to form the basis for further research with new questions in the context of an academic institute. The Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI), founded in 2009, is dedicated to the study and documentation of antisemitism, racism, nationalism, and the Holocaust. By its fellowship programme and its own work, on the one side VWI carries out extensive research. On the other side VWI's activities centre on its collections, the Holocaust-related parts of the archive of the Jewish Community, and the estate of Simon Wiesenthal with its extensive holdings on Nazi perpetrators. Due to the location of the institute in Vienna, activities especially focus on topics related to East Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. For more information about the institution and its holdings, please refer to the website of the VWI at <https://www.vwi.ac.at/index.php/en/>.

As part of a broader strategy to enable and improve access to the entire digital collections, the Arolsen Archives and the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) are co-organising an international three-day research seminar for scholars from Austria and neighbouring countries, especially from East Central and Southeastern Europe. The event will take place at the VWI in Vienna from 6 November through 8 November 2019. At its core, the seminar will enable participants to carry out their own research in the digital collections of the Arolsen Archives through a recently established "remote access" solution. Competent staff on site will provide guidance in exploring the depths of the digital archive. For this, participants will have to bring along their personal (portable) computers. Please note that remote access will only be possible on devices running Microsoft Windows. Participants will be able to save selected documents of interest free of charge.

Over the course of the event, there will be room for joint discussions about the pros and cons of working with the documents in their current digital environment. Participants are also encouraged to exchange ideas on both methodological approaches in general as well as their individual research projects. How can varying scholarly needs – for instance with regard to research on individual persons, but also larger groups, places, or specific thematic aspects of Nazi persecution – be met through the current structure of and search engine navigating the digital collections of the Arolsen Archives? Where do their limitations lie? And which future activities in processing the collections (e.g. through specific metadata indexing) have the potential to enhance researchers' experience and enable them to engage in innovative methods and topics?

The seminar is partly funded through a generous donation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, a member state of the International Commission (IC) overseeing the work of the Arolsen Archives.

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A r o l s e n A r c h i v e s

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Practical Information

The seminar will take place at the VWI in Vienna, 6 November through 8 November 2019. The event language will be English. Participants will arrive in Vienna on 5 November 2019.

Interested candidates from Austria and neighbouring countries, especially from East Central and Southeastern Europe, are encouraged to send their application via e-mail to requests-rs@arolsen-archives.org. Applications should consist of a short letter of motivation, a brief biographical note, and an overview of the project for which you intend to explore the digital collections of the Arolsen Archives (1-2 pages in total). The deadline for applications is 25 September 2019. Participants will be chosen and notified by 30 September 2019.

The organisers will cover the costs of accommodation (three nights at a hotel in Vienna), organise the hotel bookings, and provide all meals. Participants, on the other hand, will have to pay for and book their own transportation to and from Vienna. There are limited travel funds to partially support candidates from abroad. If this applies to you and you are interested in a grant, please indicate this in your letter of application.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact us at requests-rs@arolsen-archives.org. We look forward to many interesting applications!