

Women and Men in Sered' Camp, Slovakia 1941-1945*

(Post-Doctoral Project)

by

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Situated 50km outside of Bratislava, Sered' was one of three main internment camps established for Jews by the Slovak authorities between September 1941 and August 1944. During this period, Sered' housed app. 1,000 Jews as selected for forced labor. On average, the female and male forced laborers could remain in the camp for up to two years. However, Sered' also functioned as a concentration camp, overseeing the deportation of nearly 4,500 Jews from Slovakia to various camps and ghettos in the General Government during the first phase of deportations between March and October 1942. Notably, it was the only camp to be re-used by Nazi Germany in order to concentrate Jews from Slovakia for further deportation after the Slovak National Uprising. Sered', now part of the Nazi camp system, functioned as a concentration camp between September 1944 and March 1945. During these months, the second phase of deportations took place and almost 12,000 Jews were deported directly from Sered'.

My proposed post-doctoral project approaches the Holocaust - as it happened in Slovakia - from a micro-historical perspective. In my study, I seek to reconstruct the story of this particular internment camp through gender analysis, with a focus on the experiences of Jewish women and men who were imprisoned in Sered' throughout its existence. By utilizing their post-war testimonies, I analyze the accounts of survivors and highlight their perceptions of any 'unusual' experiences in Sered' - a rather 'atypical' camp in Holocaust history. I suggest that, by paying greater attention to the testimonies of female camp survivors, we can step further away from the male-dominated narrative of the Shoah. Aside from obtaining wider knowledge about the realities of camp life as seen by women, these testimonies also allow for a better understanding the experiences of Jewish people throughout the war. Moreover, such research sheds light on the substantial differences defining gendered experiences during this time.

* The name and the function of the camp in Sered' changed several times during its existence. For a more transparent reading I use "labor camp" or simply "Sered' camp" in this paper.

The lives of Jewish women and men in countries which became allies of Nazi Germany, such as Slovakia, changed dramatically, in many aspects. While Slovak authorities deported most of their local Jewish women and men from Slovakia, some were forced to work in the countries' labor camps. For those who were imprisoned in the Sered' camp, the inmates lived under extreme, but somewhat endurable conditions. Statements provided by former inmates confirm this as they describe daily life in Sered', its facilities, food rations, and camp guards, etc. In comparison to experiences in other concentration camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, to which many inmates of Sered' were eventually deported, Sered' was indeed a camp with relatively bearable conditions. Nevertheless, it was still a forced labor camp with a prison-like regime, where inmates experienced humiliation, malnutrition, violence, sexual abuse, and witnessed deportations and death. Although internment in Sered' had disrupted some of the pre-war gender structures, many women and men continued to fulfill their pre-war gender roles. At the same time, many prisoners were stripped of some of their pre-war gendered statuses and burdened by new and unfamiliar responsibilities. Thus, in this study, I illustrate some of the particularities of experiences of women and men during their time in Sered'. Furthermore, I offer a detailed analysis of the more significant aspects of camp life, which are often repeated or emphasized in the testimonies of former inmates. I will also pay attention to the aspects relating to both the public sphere and private lives of prisoners.

The main question of my project is: how was life for the women and men detained in Sered'? This question requires a closer look at the inner structure of the camp, and within my analysis asks: Was there any communitarian life, or was it unitary? Were the inmates of the camp equal partners? I am curious to investigate how the pre-war gender roles of women and men changed, shifted, or were preserved due to the extreme conditions of Sered', which we know was not such an 'atypical' camp in the Nazi framework. By applying this method of research, I hope to find answers to certain questions that we do not normally ask in the context of ghettos, extermination or concentration camps led by Nazi Germany. This enables greater understanding of the experiences of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands, Jewish men and women and their particular experiences in more 'unusual' spaces of internment during the Holocaust. And thus, we can better understand the nuances of the history of the Shoah more broadly.

Slovak camps in historiography

Among the many factors which have contributed to a lack of knowledge about the labor camps in Slovakia is the restriction, or almost non-existing access to archives prior to 1989. Arguably, this has hindered research on the Holocaust in Slovakia as a rule. Once historical and state archives in Czechoslovakia (later Czech Republic and Slovakia) became more widely accessible, a number of scholars began investigating the topic. The most crucial work *Po stopách tragédie* (On the Trail of Tragedy) was published by Ivan Kamenec in 1992. His study mentioned the labor camps for Jews in Slovakia but did not elaborate on this topic in depth. In 2004, part of a collection of eight volumes of documents entitled *Holokaust na Slovensku* (The Holocaust in Slovakia) was published, the fifth edition of which presented documents related to the Jewish labor centers and camps in Slovakia. As the collection presents these documents without further commentary, it fails to provide a deeper description or analysis of their significance, nor pay attention to the experiences of those who were affected. Later, a significant work on labor camps entitled *Pracovní a koncentračný tábor v Seredí* (The labor and concentration camp in Seredí) was published by Ján Hlavinka and Eduard Nižňanský in 2009. Year later, these two authors, along with Radoslav Ragač, developed the topic further and shed light on the final period of existence of the Seredí camp in a shared article. Although these works have enabled further research, they have also used a particularly rigid approach to the topic of camps, which tends to prioritize the sources of perpetrators, and neglect the sources of the survivors and victims. In my own study, then, I aim to fill this gap in current research on Seredí.

Some of the crucial works published in English relating to the Holocaust in Slovakia, such as those Jehuda Bauer's *Jews for Sale?* and Gila Fatran's *The Working Group*, also mention the topic of labor camps, yet, camps in Slovakia are not the primary focus of these works. The issue of Slovak labor camps for Jews, being used as a key tool of practical anti-Semitic policies in Slovakia, has not appeared as a main topic in any English-language publication. As a result, it leaves little room for discussion of the system of labor camps and centers in Slovakia during World War II. Even the outstanding work, *Der Ort des Terrors*, on the history of Nazi concentration camps has absolutely no mention of Seredí. Until 2018, the *Encyclopaedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1945* had Seredí Camp only in its index, but there is no information about the camp itself. Despite this, however; the page related to Seredí describes Theresienstadt with the information that in December 1944 four transports holding 1,400 Slovak Jews were sent there from the Seredí camp, which is of use to the overall

historiography of my study. Indeed, only the third volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933–1945* contained any detailed description of the Sered' camp.

I believe that the absence of Sered' from such comprehensive Holocaust historiographies has occurred for several reasons: Sered' was administrated by local Slovak authorities, and thus did not belong to Nazi camp system until September 1944; comparatively small size of the camp and its relatively bearable living conditions in contrast to other, better known camps such as Auschwitz- Birkenau; scattered archival sources in numerous different languages. Also known as the final period of the Holocaust in general, the period in which the camp became part of the system of Nazi camps (between September 1944 until March 1945) has also been neglected within historiographic accounts. Certainly, the lack of attention paid to Slovak camps cannot be explained by a lack of original source materials. Most of the investigated documents and testimonies are publicly available in several archives, such as the Slovak National Archive in Bratislava, the archive of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, the National Archives in Kew, or the Archives of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.

Considering this absence, my project aims to compensate for the lack of research on wartime Slovakia published in English. It also offers a concise introduction of the creation of the Slovak republic within the international socio-political changes, as well as the conditions of the Jewish community and the anti-Semitic laws in Slovakia in order to contextualize the establishment of the creation of system of labor camps for Jews in Slovakia.

Unreliable sources?

It has become apparent that the majority of the testimonies and memoirs related to Sered' camp have not been systematically examined. Thus, the core part of the sources used here are based on post-war testimonies from various archival collections of people who experienced Sered' camp as inmates, which can rarely be found in official documents pertaining to the camp's existence. Furthermore, Jewish voices were not included in the creation of the Slovak post-war narrative, as fashioned by both politicians and previous scholars. This project, then, makes a point to include the stories of Jewish women and men who were imprisoned in Sered', ranging from the inmates who initially arrived there in autumn 1941, to the period in which the very last person was deported in March 1945. Regardless of the limitations of any type of source, including the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, these documents can tell us more

about the experiences of both women and men. Such testimonies do not only offer a different perspective, but can also uncover realities of which many others could not or did not speak.

If properly contextualized, I consider testimonies to be a relevant and reliable historical source for researching daily life in the camp, important events and how the inmates of camps reacted and adjusted to the ongoing various forms of persecution. Thus, the main arguments of the study are illustrated with the testimonies of significant number of persons who were interned in camp Sered' between the years of 1941 and 1945. These testimonies are part of the collections of Oral History Project of Foundation of Milan Šimečka (NMS), Yad Vashem Archives (YVA), United States Holocaust Memorial and Museum (USHMM), the Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation (VHA), and several other smaller Slovak and Czech NGOs (among many Post Bellum, Edah, etc.). Most of the interviews with these survivors were conducted in the 1990s and later. However, I am also analyzing the earlier testimonies of survivors which were given shortly after the end of the war. My preliminary research has showed that there was no homogenous shared experience; it varied due to many aspects such as social class, age, date of arrival, pre-war occupation, and most importantly gender. Thus, I am trying to generalize information from various sources – mainly the testimonies which disclose characteristic responses – which can also be found in and corroborated with other prisoner accounts. I hope that this will portray a series of typical perceptions which, at the same time, shed light on the wide range of experiences of Sered' prisoners. It is important to add that many of these survivors were young adults, teenagers and children when they experienced Sered'. Although their memory of the camp is mediated by their age, these testimonies also reflect on their experiences as adults, as well as the roles and actions of older inmates in the camp. Over the time, they were able to better understand what happened in Sered', or they have created an interpretation of what they went through.

To frame and contextualize the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, I also cite authentic documents of the contemporary Slovak authorities such as the Ministry of Interior, and official documents and correspondence of the Jewish Center, a Slovak version of the Jewish Council, which are part of archival collections of the State Archive of Bratislava, Slovak National Archive, Yad Vashem Archives, Moreshet Archive and USHMM. Official documents of Slovak authorities present the basis for understanding the function and purpose of the labor camps, while the practical steps carried out by the Jewish Centre recorded its forced cooperation in carrying out the anti-Semitic policies of the Slovak authorities and the Nazi regime. Accordingly, I also examine official documents and correspondence of the Jewish Centre, as

well as their official wartime newspaper publication. Furthermore, my project also includes testimonies which were part of the perpetrator war trials in the late 1940s and 1970s.

The intention to focus predominantly (but not exclusively) on later survivor testimonies is primarily due to the fact that many of other sources, including post-war trials after the war or in 1970s, only provide the perspectives of male survivors. This absence of women exposes a contemporary society – Jewish and non-Jewish, and requires closer reading, reconsiderations and very careful interpretations. By re-visiting and examining survivors' testimonies, the goal is to gain insight into the gendered experiences of those imprisoned in the Sereď camp, and to analyze the differences and similarities between female and male survivors' remembrance, and their possible causes. Only by incorporating female voices can a broader and more comprehensive view on Jewish experiences during the Holocaust can be achieved, particularly concerning the Slovak perspective.

Atypical Camp – Unusual Experiences

By as early as 1949, Samuel Gringauz had argued in *'The ghetto as an experiment of Jewish social organization'* that, while concentration camps needed to be approached as an individual regime, the ghetto was in fact a social regime which developed its own social life, as structured into a social community. But what about places which were neither a typical camp, nor a typical ghetto? How should we analyze these spaces? This project focuses on Jewish public and private discourse, which was dramatically transformed by the unfamiliar space and an 'unusual' camp experience, and thus changed its very essence. So, I seek to investigate the shifts in models of gender roles that emerged there during the war. More specifically, I examine the new gendered experiences that emerged and prevailed during the war time in 'atypical' camp of Sereď.

In order to understand the wartime life of Jews in the Sereď camp, then, we must understand Sereď as an 'atypical' space of exclusion. While Sereď was located in the home region of most of those imprisoned there, its inmates did not live in a familiar space. By no means was Sereď a continuation of pre-war Jewish life in Slovak villages, towns and cities. The life of its' inmates was radically transformed. Yet, because the camp was nothing like any of 'typical' camps in General Government or Nazi Germany, it is crucial to look at the space of Sereď in a new way, and to understand the place which shaped the daily lives of the Jewish women and men who were forced to experience this.

As I have outlined, Sered' existed from September 1941 until end of March 1945. Its function, its purpose, and its conditions changed several times throughout this duration, yet apart from some construction works, the area of the camp remained almost intact. The Sered' camp complex was located within the boundaries of the Slovak town carrying the same name – Sered', yet, the camp was not a part of the town. Detached from the local area, the Sered' camp was surrounded by fences, yet, not hermetically closed. Unlike most of the labor camps we are more familiar with, the inmates could keep their own civilian clothes, as well as some of their packed possessions. There was no shaving of hair. Nor were families separated. Members of one family could stay together and lived in one room. Yet, there were guards, rollcalls, punishments. And, unlike the ghettos, not many urban institutions functioned within Sered'. There were no cafés, service providers or shops available to Jews, as was the case in the Warsaw ghetto, for instance. There was only a small shop for essentials, and the Jewish hospital, which was originally located in Bratislava, and later moved to Sered'. However, in similarity to many of the Jewish ghettos, the camp had its own governing body—the Jewish council, and Jewish police. Additionally, there was a day care, kindergarten, and a school for children.

Undoubtedly, Sered' was neither a 'typical' ghetto, nor a 'typical' camp, but rather a combination of both, creating a deformed sphere that operated under prison-like conditions. Nonetheless, Sered' was a space in which its inmates, to some extent, shaped the new enforced society and gained rather 'unusual' experiences of the Holocaust.

Space of Temporal Safety or Borrowed Time?

The main aim of my project is to discuss experiences of Jewish female and male inmates in Sered', and to compare them. While attention is paid for exploring the collapse, shift or 'preservation' of pre-war gender roles, it is also necessary to establish what was so 'unusual' about the experiences and 'atypical' about the space of the camp in Sered'. My project, then, also discusses the position of smaller labor camps in the machinery of destruction of European Jewry for the Slovak Jews in particular. In my research, I intend to shed light on the marginalization of such camps in the broader memory of the Holocaust. By doing so, the project incorporates memories of former inmates – women and men - struggling to fit into generally 'accepted' narratives of the Holocaust, as we have come to understand them. This aspect of my study, which adopts a macro-historical level, investigates the history and memory of Sered' camp as an example of those omitted places of the destruction of European Jewry. However,

this project also discusses Sered' camp as either a place for visible groups of 'privileged' inmates, or rather a camp which can be considered a 'privileged' space.

Of course, there were thousands of Jews who were held in Sered' for only a couple of days before further deportation. For these transit prisoners, Sered' did not mean any sort of privilege. Those who had limited possibilities to interact with the rest of the inmates were automatically at the bottom of the social stratification of the Sered' camp, if at all. However, Sered' also accommodated about 1,000 forced laborers. As a result, their placement in Sered' was considered by many prisoners as a chance to protect oneself and his/her family. As many survivors have pointed out – it was a 'privilege' to have a place in Sered'.

The local Jewish Council – the Jewish Centre – was engaged in establishing Sered' and other labor camps in Slovakia, with a plan to protect those placed in these camps as forced laborers by keeping them in the country. The placement of many Jews from Slovakia in Sered' (from Bratislava in particular) was, in fact, a strategy of the Jewish Centre to save at least some of its' Slovak Jews. Undeniably, the forced laborers as a group in Sered' might have been considered 'privileged' inmates. Similarly, as outlined by Christopher Browning in his book *Remembering Survival. Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* some Jews bought their way into subsequent slavery in Starachowice camp as the best alternative to deportation and death, and so Slovak Jews used a very similar strategy by gaining their access to Sered' camp. Yet, it is important to notice that this category of potentially 'privileged' inmates was not homogenous either. Among them, there were those who were considered to be at the highest position of the camp hierarchy, such as leaders of the Jewish Council; heads of different workshops; members of the Jewish police; or doctors (and their families). Those who slipped involuntarily to the lowest strata were prisoners such as single women, married women whose husbands were elsewhere for different reasons and foreigners with no previous networks within the Slovak Jewry (such as Polish Jewish refugees). Therefore, this project thus explores the problems of judgement and representation in relation to Jewish victims of the Holocaust who were able to postpone their deportations, and thus protect themselves and their families in a camp accommodating the 'privileged' prisoners. Nonetheless, in postwar testimonies, many reflected this 'privilege' only as a temporary safety or a borrowed time.

Yet, what sort of 'privilege' was an imprisonment in a forced labor camp? Eventually no inmates of Sered', including those belonging to the group of 'privileged' ones, were protected, and all were deported further. Thus, I am focusing on those who had been placed there as forced laborers, with the perspective of Sered' not only as a labor camp, but also as a transit and concentration camp. By taking Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi's highly influential

essay on the 'grey zone' as a point of departure, I examine the extreme situations as confronted by the camp as a whole which, at the same time, accommodated a significant number of said 'privileged' inmates. Importantly, I am not discussing the unprecedented ethical dilemmas of individuals under Nazi persecution who faced more fatal conditions and daily death threats. Rather, I am looking at these Jewish inmates as inhabitants of a 'privileged' camp. Therefore, the project frames experiences of Jewish women and men by understanding Sered' as a 'privileged' space, a space with the 'privilege' of temporal protection.

Pre-war gender roles: Shifts - Total Collapse - Preservation

The micro-historical approach of this project, and consideration of Primo Levi's thesis on the 'grey zone' leads to the main goal of my project, aiming towards a detailed gender analysis of Holocaust experiences. Both male and female experiences of former inmates of Sered' camp will be compared, whilst paying attention to the impact of gender identities on survivors' ways of remembering and narrating their testimony. To understand the experiences of Jewish women and men in Sered', the pre-war gender roles require academic attention. Thus, an investigation of a potential collapse, shift or preservation of pre-war gender roles in the space of the Sered' camp during the Holocaust can be achieved.

According to the census of 1921, the Jewish minority of the newly established Czechoslovak republic was comprised of 354,342 individuals. Each part of Czechoslovakia had its own diverse Jewish communities, with different background and conditions to develop. In general, there were three separate and quite different Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia – the ones of the Czech lands, Jews in Subcarpathian Rus, and Slovakian Jewry. The percentage of the Jewish population in different parts of the country also adds to this differentiation. As one of the most prominent scholars of East Central European Jewry, Ezra Mendelsohn, rightly stated: the Czech Jewry was the best example in East Central Europe of a West European-type Jewish community. The Subcarpathian was a typical East European type Jewry, and the third – the Slovak Jewry - was something of an intermediary case. Additionally, Jewish religious affiliation in Slovakia was divided into three branches – Orthodox, Neolog, and Status Quo Ante, which were adapted in the successor states which had been part of Kingdom of Hungary before 1918. These realities of the Slovak Jewish community continued to exist in the wartime Slovak republic, and are important for understanding the Jewish family life, and role of women and men in Slovak labor camps.

In traditional Jewish families, the status of women and men remained ‘preserved’ in relation to what was socially accepted and desired in Czechoslovak society throughout the 1930s. While we clearly see some differences between women – mothers in orthodox, reform religious, assimilated, or atheist families – aside from some minor examples, it was the woman who was expected to engage in marriage and motherhood. It was the woman who was also supposed to sacrifice any of her ambitions for her family, while a main task of the man is represented by a role of a breadwinner in all senses—both the provider for and protector of a family. Yet, more and more Jewish women, especially the ones from younger generations, turned their interest and attention towards higher education, and pursuing success in professional career.

This project retains its focus on women and men who were raised in various family settings. I investigate the cases of women and men with consideration of their religion (from strictly observant to non-observant, and converts), and pre-war social background (from the lowest class of peasants, and factory workers to middle and upper middle class). I also consider if one arrived to Sered’ alone, or with parents, or together with a life partner and children, or if separated from their love ones, as well as entering the camp together with friends as a group. In doing so, we can follow either the total disruption of their private lives, or if there was some continuation of pre-war networks.

I also illustrate the experiences of women and men as depicted in their own narrative, or by their fellow inmates. Additionally, I attempt to analyze the roles of women and men who did not share their stories in the postwar period, either because they were killed in the Holocaust, or who’s experiences were simply not recorded. I am interested how these people perceived and remembered their own experiences, as well as the shared ones. Predominantly, I concentrate on defining some particularities of the experiences of women and men during their time of internment in Sered’. Subjects of analysis are aspects from both the public sphere, f.e. positions in the camp and occupation, as well as private life which involves relationships, circumstances in families, motherhood vs. fatherhood, or sexuality, etc. Not only am I interested in their age, social status before the war, religious affiliation, political and ideological interests and involvements, etc. but also how these impacted their camp life and survival strategies as Sered’ inmates. By doing so, I seek to emphasize the collapse, shift or preservation of pre-war gender roles of these Jewish women and men, and what impact on such changes of gender roles had the settings and conditions in Sered’.

Moreover, the main body of the project examines how similarly or differently Jewish women and men, who lived together and experienced similar lives in the camp in Sered’,

perceived various events and daily living conditions. It will explore the behavioral patterns, social interactions, networks between inmates and camp guards, and among inmates themselves, and emphasize the agency of the inmates in the camp through comparative gender analysis. To do so, it addresses the need for challenging the male narratives with those of former female inmates, whose voices have thus far been neglected and marginalized. This project, seeks to present a gender-related experience in the newly established society within the camp system.

Conclusion

Thanks to the work of important, emerging feminist historians, the initial state of Holocaust research and its' male-dominated canon of testimonies and literature has shifted, and, has now redefined the significance of research focusing on women's experiences. Such works have also stressed the ultimate position of patriarchal views on genocide more broadly. Thus, a close reading of post-war eyewitness testimonies of both women and men is fundamental in addressing crucial questions which cannot be answered by any other means. In this project, I demonstrate that an in-depth textual analysis of eyewitness testimonies allows us to reconstruct various categories of Holocaust survivors' experiences and the ways in which they coped with the new social realities in Sered' camp. Camps such as Sered' represented societies within extreme, but still relatively endurable life conditions. Consequently, this project offers a micro-historical contribution to an important body of work on female and male experience during the Holocaust. Through investigating Holocaust survivors' testimonies, the life experiences of the women and men in Sered' camp can be understood better. By considering aspects of public and private life, this project can also offer some experiences of those women and men within the prisoner society of Sered' camp who did not record their testimonies. Thus, by looking at Holocaust survivors' testimonies with a focus on their perception of life and threat of death in Sered', the project examines depictions of women and men in an 'atypical' camp in the context of the Holocaust, where many pre-war rules of gender behavior were bent, but many nevertheless remained intact.

The first section of the project describes smaller and rather 'atypical' camps, and how this shaped inmates' experiences. The project's goal is thus to re-think the views of scholarship on camps such as Sered', which was neither a 'typical' camp, nor a 'typical' ghetto. The re-consideration of the role of various camps in the genocide of European Jewry of the project, leads to analysis of 'unusual' experiences of women and men imprisoned in a camp which was

considered less severe when reflecting experiences in places with disastrous settings and daily encounters with hunger, violence, and death. My research looks at Sered' not only as an 'atypical' camp, but also as a 'privileged' space for those inmates who supposed to be protected by their placement in this camp. Moving from the concept of the grey zone, when considering 'privileged' prisoners, I am trying to apply this concept to the whole space of Sered' camp. Herewith, I am trying to see beyond these two categories of 'good' or 'bad', in order to re-think meaning of 'privilege' of and in such places.

In the second section, the aim is to reconstruct life in the camp with the focus on comparative gender analysis. To do so, the project addresses the need for challenging the male narratives with those of former female inmates. Herewith, I focus on the analysis of several aspects of public and private life for Jewish women and men in the camp. In so doing, this project uncovers fundamental differences, but also similarities in the daily experiences in Sered'. As previously stated, I am particularly interested in gender roles which were either completely transformed, slightly shifted, or remained preserved under Slovak anti-Semitic policies, and later Nazi occupation, within a smaller and rather 'atypical' camp. While it outlines the difficulties in leaving behind pre-war gender roles in general, it also proves that the change or adjustment of female and male gender roles was closely connected to and influenced by a 'privilege' they could exercise in Sered'.

I believe that this project shows a wide range of shifts, but also the preservation of the pre-war gender roles, and various strategies of adaptation to the life in the Sered' camp. Accordingly, my investigation seeks to debunk the myth of total collapse of pre-war gender roles during the Holocaust. Such analysis of testimonies shows the continuation of patriarchal ideology and perceptions on positions of women and men during the time of genocide. Drawing my conclusions from the analysis of testimonies, a more nuanced view of life of Jewish inmates in 'atypical' spaces of internment during the Holocaust can be reached. Thus, such a method of study should be encouraged, as it can result in more nuanced assessments of those Jewish women and men whose 'unusual' experiences in 'atypical' camps, which do not comfortably fit into general public knowledge of the Holocaust and Slovak Jewry.