

Jiri Franek At A Meeting Of The Auschwitz Historical Group



This photograph was taken at a meeting of the Auschwitz Historical Group in 2004.

I spoke out here, with a defence of the resistance in BIIb, as this resistance movement tends to be overlooked and they don't want to recognize it.

A big book about uprisings in concentration camps came out, and there isn't much there about our resistance movement, only a couple of lines, as if it hadn't existed.

Allegedly it wasn't resistance, when there wasn't a single shot fired and no one fell. But that isn't true!

Unfortunately a rivalry arose, between the main camp at Auschwitz and us at Birkenau.

The main camp truly did have a well organized resistance, but they didn't rise up either. In fact we had considered cooperating with the main camp

- after all, there was movement between the two - for example locksmiths used to go from one to the other, so they could have brought over some information, provided a connection.

The resistance in the main camp wasn't interested in our planned uprising though! Here there was a real rivalry, because the main camp [Auschwitz I.] said: the end of the war is approaching, and such an uprising will cost more lives than if we wait for the war to end.

Even in the eventuality that departure for the gas chambers will be drawing near, and we rise up, they refuse to join us; that it doesn't make any sense any more, the end of the war is approaching, and more people will die than just waiting for the end of the war.

If I'm to talk openly, there was likely some anti-Semitism involved, because the main camp at Auschwitz, that wasn't really a Jewish camp, while we, Birkenau, that is BIIb, were expressly a purely Jewish camp.

So from today's viewpoint our resistance is neglected, not acknowledged, and I think that we're being done a great injustice. Perhaps the resistance movement of the main Auschwitz camp has also done us a great injustice.

This lasts to this day - when the chairman of the Auschwitz Historical Group, Bartek, had a lecture regarding the Auschwitz resistance, he didn't mention even a word regarding the fact that an uprising had also been planned in Birkenau.

I'm a member of this Auschwitz Historical Group, so I also asked to speak, and added that Birkenau also had a highly organized resistance, of which I had been a member, that it should be taken into account.

He told me that such a remark must be made in writing, so I submitted it in writing, and he nevertheless did not publicize it anywhere.

So I rebelled and at the next opportunity I forcefully expressed myself, and it ended up that the group's internal magazine for historians, named 'Auschwitz,' published my protest, that there had also been a resistance movement in BIIb.

That's interesting, that all of a sudden it was too little for them that we had merely been preparing for it.