

ANNY AND PAWEL

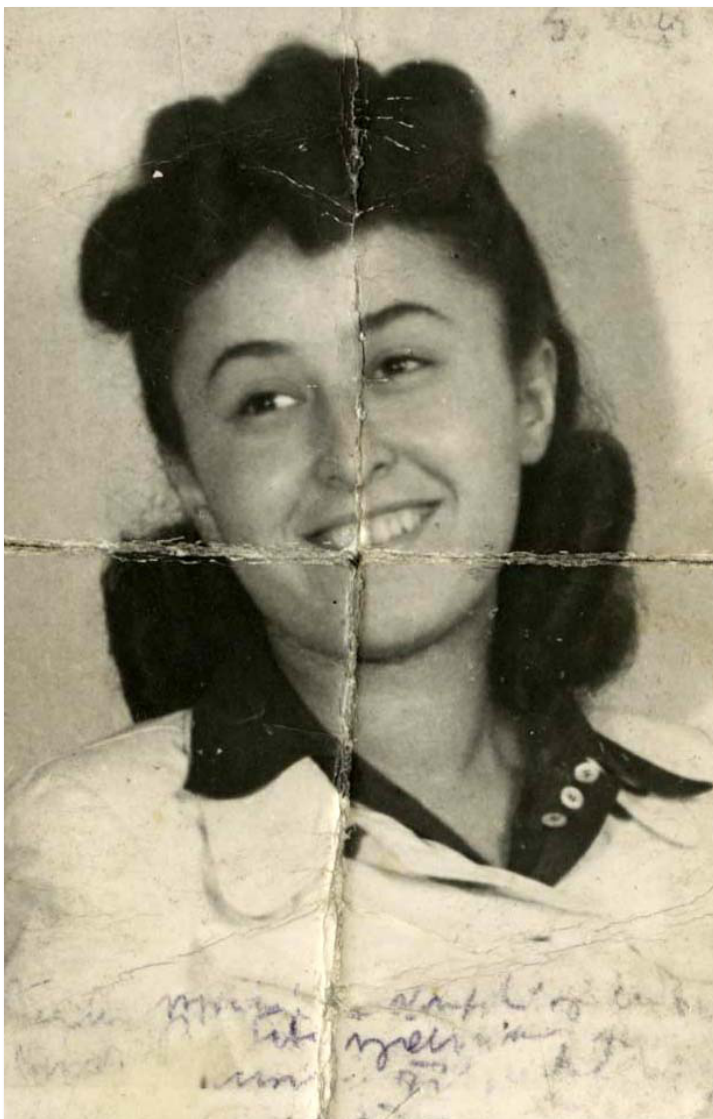
Artifacts are usually kept by people as a souvenir and a symbol of a connection. During the Holocaust, when connection to family and beloved ones often became impossible, the artifacts held added meaning, and holding onto them bestowed strength and hope.

In September 1944, for the first time, two transports consisting of only young people were sent from Theresienstadt. Anny and Pawel, who had met and become friendly in Theresienstadt, married hurriedly three days before Pawel was deported to Auschwitz, in the hope that it would make it easier for them to find each other later on. Shortly before he was deported, Anny gave Pawel her photograph and wrote an inscription on it.

A few days later, together with many of the wives of the young people who had already been deported, Anny, her sister and mother volunteered to join the transport, on the basis of a false promise that had been made to them, that they would be reunited with their loved ones.

In an interview, Pawel described his arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau:

"We took off our clothes. Took off everything. There was absolutely nothing left on us. I kept one thing with me – a photograph of my wife Anny, who I had married just three days earlier (in Theresienstadt). I folded the photograph so that it would be very small and... put it into my mouth. I carried the photograph with me everywhere until the end of the war. I hid it in clothes and pockets, depending on what I was wearing. The photograph was a kind of fetish, an object of worship, a type of mezuzah, or amulet; something that connected me to life outside, to normal life. I was romantically connected to Anny, a connection that was very complex, but that photograph was a piece of normality."



Ancy Loewinger Tzchori gave her husband, Paweł, a photo of herself with an inscription before he was deported to Auschwitz.
Yad Vashem Archives.