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### **MICKY (MOUSE) IN A MOUSETRAP** GURS CAMP THROUGH THE LENS OF HORST ROSENTHAL'S GRAPHIC NOVELS

To live like God in France was part of the world outlook of many of German and Austrian political/racial refugees who, following the Nazi rise to power and the Anschluss, saw France, the cradle of human rights, as a safe haven. Ironically, with the outbreak of World War II, the approximately 35,000 stateless exiles were designated as enemy aliens, and consequently interned in various camps. Among them was the artist Horst Rosenthal (Breslau, 1915–Auschwitz, 1942), interned in Gurs camp. Rosenthal's comics used irony and satire in protesting and criticizing the collaborationist Vichy regime.

Horst Rosenthal left a legacy of three graphic novels — Mickey Mouse in Gurs Camp; A Day in the Life of an Inmate; and Small Guide through Gurs Camp — each depicting daily life there from a different viewpoint. The first is narrated through the eyes of Disney's Mickey Mouse; the second relates the daily routine as a fairy tale and Book of Hours; while the last is a "tourist guide" presenting the camp's 'marvels'. The camp environment, the Kafkaesque French bureaucracy, the hierarchy, and the harsh life of the inmates, including lack of food, poor hygiene and sanitary conditions, along with isolation from the outside world and dream of escape, is drawn with humor and artistic disguise. The paper will introduce Gurs camp and its inmates as seen by Rosenthal and will delineate the sharp contrast between the artist's humorous storyboards and the painful events implied, which enhances the sardonic criticism lying beneath.

Dr. **Pnina Rosenberg** is an art historian specializing in the art/legacy of the Holocaust, focusing on women artists' oeuvres and graphic novels during and after the Second World War. She lectures on those subjects in the Technion (Haifa) and has presented papers at international conferences and published books and articles, among them the coedited *Critical Insights: The Diary of Anne Frank* (2017) to which she contributed a paper on Anne Frank's Graphic Novel. Dr. Rosenberg is the art editor of *Prism: Journal for Holocaust Educators*, Yeshiva University, NY.