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For many survivors, the struggle for Holocaust justice was a decades-long battle beginning in the earliest days of liberation. The majority of Jewish survivors attempting to start life anew remained for years in postwar Europe, and specifically in postwar Germany, in displaced persons (DP) camps. As survivors unable or unwilling to repatriate poured into the U.S. occupation zone, Bavaria became home to a diverse Jewish DP community that had survived the Holocaust under disparate circumstances. Using materials from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives and the JDC Archives, this lecture explores how Jewish DPs living just outside of Munich in Föhrenwald, the longest-running Jewish DP camp in postwar Europe, conceived of and acted upon justice for the harms they and their loved ones suffered during the Holocaust.

Alexandra Kramen is a Claims Conference fellow and Ph.D. candidate in History at Clark University’s Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her doctoral research has received additional support from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.; the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich; and the Leo Baeck Institute in New York. She is the recipient of the 2020-2021 Fred and Ellen Lewis/JDC Archives Fellowship. She is using the JDC Archives to examine how relationships and interactions between Jewish DPs and JDC operatives in DP Camp Föhrenwald shaped DPs’ notions of, and actions taken toward, justice.