

PHOTOGRAPHERS RECORDING HISTORY, ARCHIVISTS PRESERVING HISTORY

The ITAR-TASS Photo Archives in Moscow holds millions of negatives from the past century. Throughout the decades of revolution, war and political upheaval, the archivists kept on with the unglamorous but important task of preserving these valuable documents of human history.

On these fragile slivers of film lies the irrefutable proof of horrific crimes against humanity that took place more than half-century ago. Images of the Holocaust bear “eye” witness to atrocities that would be almost impossible to believe if they had been described only through verbal or written reports.

Images of a wedding in modern Moscow demonstrate the enormous transformation that has taken place since the days of militaristic displays in Red Square of the 1920s. In 2004, the speed of digital technology and the internet have enabled the modern photographer to capture a split-second moment of individual triumph at the Olympic Games and transmit the image around the world in seconds.

And sadly, within days of the joyous display in Athens, the photographer’s lens reminded us once again of humanity’s terrible capacity for inhumanity as the eyes of the world witnessed the terrible tragedy that occurred at a school in Beslan. Both of these images will be filed in the photo archives for future generations.