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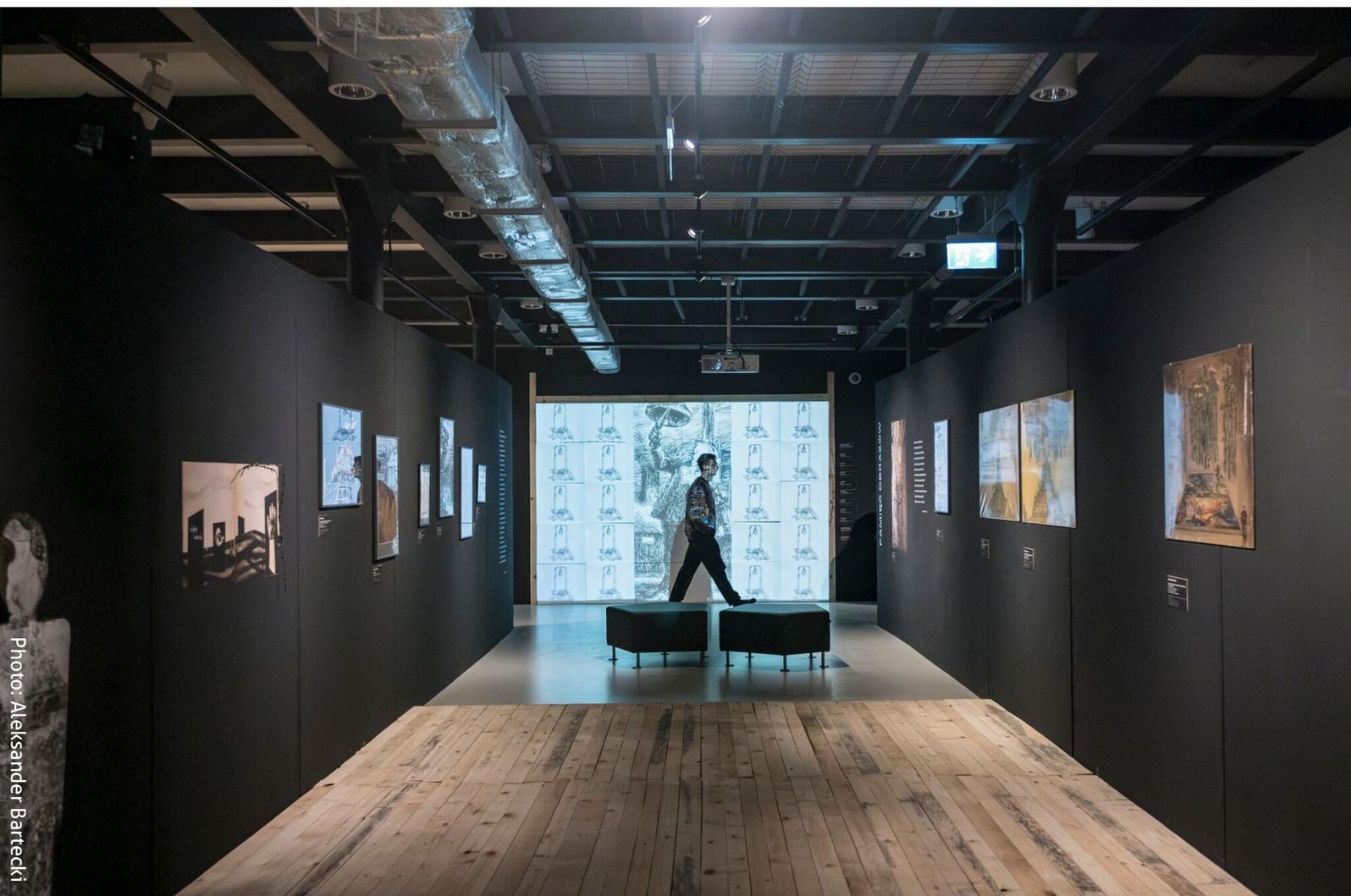


Photo: Aleksander Barteki

THE BURDEN OF SURVIVAL. ARTISTS AFTER AUSCHWITZ. EXHIBITION AT THE SILESIAN MUSEUM.

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HAS BEEN
APPOINTED
DIRECTOR OF
POLIN MUSEUM

COMMANDANT'S
OFFICE BUILDING:
RECLAIMING THE
MEMORY OF THE
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MAUTHAUSEN
MEMORIAL
RESEARCH PRIZE
2026

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HOLOCAUST HERITAGE
IN THE 21ST CENTURY – CALL FOR PAPERS

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Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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DARIUSZ STOLA HAS BEEN APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF POLIN MUSEUM

Professor Dariusz Stola has been appointed Director of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews for a five-year term. He received his nomination from Marta Cienkowska, the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, on 19 February. Professor Stola will succeed Zygmunt Stępiński, whose second term as director comes to an end on 28 February.

Professor Stola is a historian specializing in contemporary Polish history and Polish–Jewish relations. He is the author of more than 130 scholarly articles and six books, as well as an experienced cultural institution manager. He previously served as Director of POLIN Museum in the years 2014-2019, which is when the Core Exhibition was opened. The program he co-created—the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of March '68 in particular—helped confirm the institution's standing as one of Europe's leading history museums.

Professor Stola serves on the boards of several academic and museum institutions. Since 2024, he has chaired the International Auschwitz Council and, since 2023, he has been a member of the Academic Council of the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. He has received numerous awards and distinctions, including the Irena Sendler Award (funded by Taube Philanthropies) and the City of Warsaw Award in 2020. In 2025, he was honored with the Silver Medal for Merit to Culture – Gloria Artis.

Dariusz Stola emphasizes that the mission of POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews is to restore and preserve the memory of the history of Polish Jews, to build mutual understanding, and to counter antisemitism. His goal is to further strengthen the Museum's position as a leading European center of knowledge on Polish–Jewish history—an institution committed to reliable public debate, open to diverse audiences, and actively engaged in international cooperation.

The program for the years 2026–2031 envisages the continuation and development of the Museum's existing strategy. The new director highlights some of the key priorities: modernizing selected elements of the Core Exhibition, expanding the Museum's digital offer, enlarging and systematically developing both material and digital collections. Professor Stola also plans to implement an ambitious temporary exhibition program, beginning in 2027 with the first exhibition in Poland devoted to Barnett Newman, American abstract painter of Polish descent. Education will remain a priority—the continued development of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Campaign, programs for teachers and young people, and an innovative youth engagement initiative. Another important objective will be to support local initiatives dedicated to the preservation of Jewish heritage across Poland through the POLIN Award.



Prof. Dariusz Stola
Photo: M. Jaźwiecki / Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich

COMMANDANT'S OFFICE BUILDING: RECLAIMING THE MEMORY OF THE CAMP FOR POLISH CHILDREN IN ŁÓDŹ

The Polish Youth Custody Camp of the Security Police in Łódź (Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei in Litzmannstadt), as this German Nazi isolation facility was officially called (1942–1945), was a unique place. Described as an educational institution, it was in reality segregationist in nature. Based on arbitrary decisions by the occupying authorities, Polish children up to the age of 16 from territories incorporated into the Third Reich were sent there. Referred to by Survivors and city residents as the “camp on Przemysłowa Street,” it became part of the local, albeit sometimes marginalized, memory of the occupation of Łódź.

It was established in Marysin, in the north-eastern part of the city, in an area carved out of the Litzmannstadt ghetto. It operated within existing single-family housing supplemented by additional makeshift barracks. Initially intended for several hundred young prisoners, some two to three thousand children passed through the camp during its operation, of whom around one hundred died or were murdered. Like the entire area of the former ghetto, after the war it returned to its original civilian function. Most of the camp buildings were demolished. Physical traces disappeared, and with them, human memory. In the early 1960s, a housing estate and a major thoroughfare were constructed on the site, destroying many historical remains. The decisions made at that time completely obliterated the layout and appearance of the former camp. One of the few reminders was a monument erected in 1971, which, however, was not located within the actual camp grounds.

Among the few preserved structures associated with the camp, one is of particular importance. It is a small, two-story building at 34 Przemysłowa Street, located right next to the former main gate, which housed the camp administration (Verwaltung). For many years, it was the only address clearly identified with its wartime role. It has drawn both individuals and organized groups visiting this historical space. The memory of the camp and its victims has been cultivated by several local institutions, including the Museum of Independence Traditions, the Marek Edelman Dialogue Center, and the local branch of the Institute of National Remembrance. However, it was only the establishment in 2021 of a new, independent institution—the Museum of Polish Children – Victims of Totalitarianism. German Nazi Camp for Polish Children in Łódź (1942–1945)—that allowed the dynamics of commemoration to change.

After many efforts, the former commandant's office building was acquired. It was secured for public use with the intention of incorporating it into a newly planned museum complex. Due to its small size and location within dense residential development, it is not suited to serve as the primary museum facility. The revitalization project aims to preserve this surviving camp structure, restore its original prewar appearance, and assign it a new museum function. In 2025, thanks to a targeted grant from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, it became possible to implement the project of its reconstruction and adaptation. The priority is to carry out conservation and construction work on the commandant's office building and a small pavilion of the former camp post office located on the same plot. Simultaneously, the project involves the creation of

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VISIT.AUSCHWITZ.ORG. ENTRY CARDS TO THE MEMORIAL AVAILABLE ONLY ONLINE FROM 1 MARCH

Starting March 1, individual visitors will be able to book entry cards exclusively online through the official system at visit.auschwitz.org. This policy applies to both guided tours and free admission. The change is designed to help visitors plan their visits more effectively and eliminate lines at the Museum entrance.

This is primarily a response to the unethical practices of certain tour operators. They sold Museum tours that included transportation from Kraków. At the last minute, customers were informed that, due to alleged booking issues, the departure time was being moved to very early in the morning or even the middle of the night. Unfortunately, this misleading practice became a business model for some entities. Furthermore, they shifted the blame for the supposed difficulties onto the Museum, which was entirely untrue," said Andrzej Kacorzyk, Deputy Director of the Museum responsible for visitor services.

Previously, visitors arriving at the closed Museum entrance as early as 3:00 or 4:00 a. m., were forced to stand in line simply to purchase an entry card once the Museum visitor services center opened.

"Even if entry cards were still available, visitors sometimes had to wait several hours for their tour to begin. We also documented heated conflicts among some 'tour operators' over their spots in line, which required intervention by the Museum Security and even the Police. Thanks to the changes being introduced, such situations will no longer occur.

Visitors will be able to plan their visit in advance and choose the most convenient way to reach the Museum," said Bartosz Bartyzel, the spokesman of the Museum.. A large parking area is available directly in front of the main entrance of the Museum. Oświęcim is also accessible via public transportation, including trains and buses. The train station is located 1,500 meters from the main entrance.

Under the new policy, entry cards will no longer be available for purchase on-site at the Museum main entrance. Both organized groups and individual visitors can reserve entry cards at visit.auschwitz.org up to three months in advance.

As before, free entry cards can be booked up to seven days in advance. Guided tour tickets will remain available until they are sold out.

"This means that even when planning a last-minute trip to the Museum, it will still be possible to check real-time availability for guided tours and to book them immediately. All of this is primarily intended to ensure visitors' comfort, so that they no longer have to stand in lines, and are no longer intentionally misled into those lines by third parties," emphasized



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TEACHING OBEDIENCE

Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) promotes ethical leadership for today's professionals through annual fellowships, ethical leadership trainings, and symposia, among other means. Each year, FASPE awards 80 to 90 fellowships to graduate students and early-career professionals in six fields: Business, Clergy, Design & Technology, Journalism, Law, and Medicine. Fellowships begin with immersive, site-specific study in Germany and Poland, including at Auschwitz and other historically significant sites associated with Nazi-era professionals. While there, fellows study Nazi-era professionals' surprisingly mundane and familiar motivations and decision-making as a reflection-based framework to apply to ethical pitfalls in their own lives. We find that the power of place translates history into the present, creating urgency in ethical reflection.

Each month one of our fellows publishes a piece in *Memoria*. Their work reflects FASPE's unique approach to professional ethics and highlights the need for thoughtful ethical reflection today.

I can say that I have always done my duty and have never done anything contrary to what was expected of me.

— Eduart Wirths, Chief SS doctor at Auschwitz.

"The other day, I walked into the operation room. The patient, whom I had never met before, was already under general anesthesia and the gynecologist said, 'Ah good, you're here. Come do a vaginal examination to feel this massive polyp we're about to remove.'"

This was stated by one of my fellow students during a so-called "medical ethics class." Typically, in these classes, small groups of medical students discuss times when they had to make difficult ethical decisions. On paper, these classes should be an opportunity to talk about patient cases that were ethically challenging and to review how these cases were handled by the medical team. In reality, however, most students use the class to confess instances when they had to bear witness to something—or were told to act in a way—that they felt was unethical.

In the aforementioned case, after weighing the pros and cons of doing the vaginal examination, the students in class unanimously felt that it was morally wrong to internally examine a patient who is unconscious and who had not previously given consent.

The teacher then asked: "So, who would refuse to examine the patient?" A painful silence followed. No one raised their hand. Everyone was aware that they would rather act in a way they perceive as morally unacceptable than speak up to a supervising physician.

"There is probably no physician or medical student who has not seen or participated in callousness (or worse) in the treatment of patients in response to an order of a resident or an attending physician," Eric J. Cassell, M.D. and professor, writes in an article about the obedience experiments of Stanley Milgram.

Multiple studies have found that up to 60% of students reported witnessing unethical treatment of a patient. Another study found that almost all of third- and fourth year



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relative ease with which physicians—members of my own medical profession with its claim to healing—could be socialized to killing.” A large portion of his book focuses on the physicians at Auschwitz.

Perceived powerlessness

Many of the Auschwitz doctors described a feeling of powerlessness—of being “a tiny cog in someone else’s machine.” As a physician, you had to carry out sterilizations “as it was simply ordered by the university which received its order from the state health offices,” one of Auschwitz’s doctors said in an interview with Lifton. In Auschwitz “you’re just there on the spot and helpless.” Another former Nazi doctor told Lifton that “it was a horrible thing [,] but we couldn’t do anything [else].”

Whether conscious or subconscious, this mode of thinking shifts the blame to the person giving orders, to the supervisor, or to the system. In the perception of these Nazi physicians, they were simply serving as agents. They believed they had no choice. By succeeding at being obedient, the doctors also, in their own minds, shed individual responsibility for their actions.

Doubling

Lifton also describes a phenomenon he termed “doubling,” which he described as “the division of the self into two functioning wholes, so that a part self acts as an entire self.”

The other self “is created on behalf of what one perceives as one’s own healing or survival,” he continued. And in “avoidance of guilt: the second self tends to be the one performing the ‘dirty work.’”





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Professionals, in particular, may have a special capacity for doubling, Lifton argues. In them, a professional self can be joined to a prior self. In physicians, for instance, a “medical self” is almost a necessity. The “medical self” enables the physician to be compassionate (original

commander, mentored by another doctor, and he participated in the selections without further incident.

The doctor [...] if not living in a moral situation [...] where limits are very clear [...] is very dangerous.

– Auschwitz survivor

In light of these and other dark pages in medical history, there is an obligation for physicians to constantly reconsider their practices. Although standard medical training today is in no way comparable to the practices of doctors at Auschwitz, some of the psychological mechanisms Lifton described are disturbingly familiar to medical students.

In their essay on professionalism, then-medical students Andrew Brainard and Heather Brislen paint the unsettling picture that most students “seem to adopt an implicit set of rules that place hospital etiquette, adherence to academic hierarchy, and subservience to authority above patient centered virtues.”

“Students become ‘professional’ and ‘ethical’ chameleons because it is the only way to navigate the minefield of an unprofessional medical school or hospital culture,”²⁴ they write. Students are molded into obedience, and learn that they get better grades in professionalism, when compromising their ethical standards and “mimicking the unprofessional behavior of their educators.”

Many students witness unethical acts for which the physicians in question are not held accountable, as they are protected by the hierarchy of authority. Because reporting or questioning these acts is regarded as disruptive and therefore unprofessional behavior, many students will very quickly learn to simply conform. As a result students feel “mute” in morally distressing situations and complicit as bystanders to their superiors’ actions, which causes them to feel powerless and “trapped in a hierarchy.”

This is a way for students to distance themselves from their inaction or immoral actions by shifting the blame to the system or supervisor and explaining to themselves that they have no choice.

It may very well be that, in order to adapt, students feel inclined to double and form a “medical self” that will act in the way that is expected of them. However, as Lifton and Rank describe, the risk is that this medical self may ultimately replace the prior self.

The consequences of this cycle of hierarchical and social pressure, moral compromise, and consequent habituation are many. Most importantly, this can lead to an erosion in professional and academic integrity, as exhibited in a study showing that first year students were more likely than more advanced students to identify case scenarios describing academic dishonesty as being unacceptable.

Furthermore, a larger proportion of the more advanced students indicated that they had or would engage in such dishonest behavior. The erosion of professional integrity was also evident in a survey that asked medical students in different years of their education about their experience with and attitudes towards cheating. In their first year, 97 to 100% of students said they expected not to cheat in medical school, but by their fourth year, up to a quarter of all students reported having cheated in activities directly related to patient care. These actions, such as lying about having ordered a test, reporting findings elicited by others, and recording tasks not performed, were often motivated by fear or “the pressure to appear as if [one] knew everything.” One respondent noted that she was actually advised by a resident that she “would come off better if [she] lied a little.”

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During the school's annual "Power Day" medical students "define and analyze power dynamics within the medical hierarchy and hidden curriculum, using literature, guest speakers, and small groups." As a result, some units at select hospitals hold weekly meetings, called "Power Hours," in which staff and students discussed power within their departments. Instead of simply talking to students about power, the physicians (those in the position of power) were frequently reminded of their power in the hierarchical structure of medical practice—and of the consequences of their day-to-day actions. It's unclear whether these sessions have led to structural change so far, but the aim is to positively reshape the hidden curriculum for future healthcare professionals.

Appropriate disobedience

In order to support the development of physicians who value altruism, integrity, and accountability above the hierarchy of authority, we must stop regarding conformity as professional behavior.

Medical history should be incorporated into all medical schools' curricula, with special attention to mechanisms that lead physicians to become subservient and numb to ethical responsibility. The values of critical pedagogy, which aim to awaken a critical consciousness, would be a welcome addition to the curriculum.

Furthermore, students should be encouraged to be critical of institutions and to think regularly about their ethical responsibilities. When students are disobedient in order to remain true to their moral standards, they should be applauded, not punished.

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MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL RESEARCH PRIZE 2026

In October 2026 the Mauthausen Memorial to the former concentration camp will award the fifth Mauthausen Memorial Research Prize. The prize will be awarded for outstanding research on the history of the Mauthausen concentration camp complex and related topics. The prize of €5,000 may be split between two award winners.

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In awarding this prize, the Mauthausen Memorial hopes to encourage research on the history of the National Socialist camps in Austria. Particular consideration will be given to promoting early-career scholars. The Mauthausen-Studienseries published by the Mauthausen Memorial provides an additional platform for publication of work meriting particular support. There is also the possibility to publish shorter academic texts on the topic in coMMents, the eJournal of the Mauthausen Memorial.

The Mauthausen Memorial seeks to promote research in the following areas through the Mauthausen Memorial Research Prize:

- research on the history of the Mauthausen concentration camp, the associated Gusen branch camp and all the subcamps of the Mauthausen concentration camp
 - research on the history of the subcamps of the Dachau concentration camp located today within the current Austrian borders
 - interdisciplinary research on all types of Nazi-era camps with a connection to the history of the Mauthausen concentration camp complex, including extermination camps, worker educational camps, forced labour camps, forced labour camps for Jews, Gestapo camps, police internment camps and prisoner of war camps
 - research on institutions connected to the Mauthausen concentration camp, for example the history of the penal system under National Socialism
 - biographical or collective biographical research on people or groups with a connection to the history of the Mauthausen concentration camp complex such as 'prisoner groups' in National Socialist concentration camps
 - research on memorial culture and the post-war history of the Mauthausen concentration camp, research on national and international memorial societies linked to the Mauthausen concentration camp and its history
- Research papers on the topics listed above should preferably be unpublished; should such not be the case, the date of publication may not be earlier than three years before the date of submission. Academic theses and dissertations are

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Jury:

- Barbara Glück, Director of the Mauthausen Memorial
- Gabriele Hammermann, Director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site
- Gregor Holzinger Head of the Mauthausen Memorial Research Center
- Monika Kokalj Kočevar, National Museum of Contemporary History Slovenia
- Bertrand Perz, University professor at the Institute of Contemporary History of the University of Vienna, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Mauthausen Memorial

THE BURDEN OF SURVIVAL. ARTISTS AFTER AUSCHWITZ

The Silesian Museum invites to the exhibition 'The Burden of Survival' devoted to the impact of terror and incarceration on the psyche of prisoners of German concentration camps. Please note: the exhibition contains audio, olfactory and visual content that may evoke difficult emotions.

Camp literature and art, as well as post-camp testimonies of former prisoners of concentration camps, constitute a unique record of the trauma of enslavement and terror during the Second World War. They also testify to the importance of art in the search for healing from an experience that encompassed both physical and psychological suffering—one that is simultaneously individualized and generational, lacking any point of reference, and ultimately impossible to define. The creative works of former prisoners bear witness to years of attempts to capture recurring memories in adequate graphic or verbal forms. The authors undertook this effort out of a sense of responsibility to preserve the memory of the victims of the Nazi system of extermination of the enemies of the Third Reich, to pass it on to future generations, but also out of a deeply personal need to find meaning in their own suffering.

The central theme of the exhibition *The Burden of Survival* is the literary and artistic record of memories of experiences exceeding the limits of human endurance. The focus here is on narratives of emotional memory—those most deeply embedded in the body and tied to sensory perception. The sensory key guiding the selection of objects is implemented through acoustic, olfactory, visual, and tactile tools derived from the themes of the works.

The first part of the exhibition is dedicated to defining the narrator of the presented works. A distinctive feature of camp literature is its first-person narrative, fragmented into individual episodes dominated by "I," alongside extensive passages describing the collective protagonist, "we." This concept is reflected in a space that transitions fluidly from self-portraits and private correspondence from concentration camps to mass collective portraits and "anthill-like" human compositions.

The theme of identity and the loss of intimacy concludes in a space devoted to punitive isolation and the prisoner's perception of their own body. Subsequent sections explore memories of surrounding sounds and camp music, kinetic sensations related to the body's contact with tools, everyday objects, and camp infrastructure, as well as individual experiences of hunger, illness, and weather conditions.

At the centre of the exhibition are visual stimuli, frequently appearing in the writings and paintings of former prisoners, including landscapes metaphorically linked to captivity and longing for beauty. Artistic works and literary fragments are complemented by historical objects such as prisoner clothing, soup bowls, extra food coupons, and numbered patches. The material reality of the concentration camp, evident in the content and structure of visual works, resonates strongly in the narrative phenomenon of Józef Szajna, recorded on hundreds of disposable napkins presented in the final part of the exhibition. The artist gathered reflections on fundamental human values and intimate memories in a work of extraordinary fragility, loose structure, and incalculable scope due to the dispersal of its individual elements.

An audio guide accompanies visitors through the exhibition, featuring excerpts from the

Artyści po Auschwitz

Muzeum Śląskie w Katowicach / spichlerz

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THE MILITARY PATHS OF KAROL PIÓRECKI

Centuries of shared Polish-Ukrainian history are reflected in the lives of those tied to the land of their ancestors: Podlasie. Poland's former Eastern Borderlands produced many distinguished figures and numerous patriots. The story I wish to present is an example of such Polish patriotism, though it also reveals human weaknesses against the backdrop of historical events.

Karol Franciszek Piórecki was born on December 4, 1884, in Stanisławów, located 140 kilometers from Lviv; he was the son of Jan Piórecki and Karolina (née Tyrnka). He began his education at a school in Brzeżany. There he studied alongside remarkable peers: Alfred Bilik, future Voivode of Lviv, and Edward Rydz-Śmigły, who would become Marshal of the Republic of Poland and Commander-in-Chief. Piórecki's friendship with Rydz-Śmigły significantly influenced his life. Their shared experiences shaped his sense of responsibility and inspired him to join the Polish Army. As many historical publications confirm, Karol Piórecki stayed at Rydz-Śmigły's side as the latter's military career steadily advanced through the officer ranks.

Karol, through his dedication and diligence, also built a distinguished military career. He was a highly regarded by both his fellow officers and rank-and-file soldiers. He also maintained close ties with his family in Kraków, visiting them frequently. In 1921, while serving as Chief of Staff of the 20th Infantry Division, Karol Piórecki completed the War Course of the General Staff School. Around this time, his eldest son, Andrzej, was born. Andrzej's mother and Karol's wife was Irena Odyniec, likely the daughter of Major General Wincenty Odyniec. Karol's second son, Leon, was born later.

Soon, however, came a test of loyalty and friendship. It was 1926. Commander-in-Chief Józef Piłsudski, with General Rydz-Śmigły already at his side, decided to carry out reforms of the army. Due to political divisions among the command staff—including both generals and officers—an internal conflict emerged. It had the potential to turn into a civil war, which would have inflicted unimaginable losses on the newly reborn Polish state. The internal military conflict escalated into an armed confrontation, whose tragic climax unfolded on the streets of Warsaw. Former colleagues—generals and officers—along with their soldiers, faced each other on opposing sides. Shots were fired. There were dead and wounded. Major Karol Piórecki, standing alongside Marshal Piłsudski and Rydz-Śmigły, took part in this fratricidal struggle. According to records of the May 1926 events from the Military Headquarters of the President of the Republic dated May 14, 1926: 13:30 – A Hughes telegraph conversation took place between Lt. Col. Szafranow and Lt. Lutomski and Major Piórecki of the General Staff regarding the situation in Warsaw and within the Corps District. Regarding Warsaw, Major Piórecki reported the seizure of Mokotów airfield and the continued defense of the Officer Cadet School and Belweder Palace. He also expressed disbelief in rumors suggesting that the Witos government had fled by airplane to the West. It should be noted that at that time Karol Piórecki was already a General Staff Major, serving as an officer of the Third Department of the General Staff, and as Head of Section II of the General Staff.

On May 18, 1926, the sounds of gunfire fell silent and the dust on the streets of Warsaw settled. The day of reckoning had come. The losses were deeply painful, for among the dead and wounded included former friends and comrades. Karol Piórecki was assigned the somber mission of organizing the funeral for his fallen colleagues. As Ryszard Zieliński wrote in his book *Gry Majowe* (May Games), his father recalled that moment as follows:



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“Piórecki’s father was dismissed from active service following yet another stunt. While heavily intoxicated, he climbed onto a hearse and, with the flair of a cavalryman in a major’s uniform, went galloping through the streets.”

As Jerzy Kirchmayer recalled, Karol Piórecki was frequently seen in various establishments throughout Vilnius, until eventually, all trace of him was lost. His alcoholism also cost him his family. His marriage collapsed: his wife left him, and his sons were far from impressed by their father’s conduct. They are mentioned again by Barbara Narębska-Dębska-Kozłowska: “Across the street lived Andrzej Piórecki. All the boarding school girls were in love with Andrzej Piórecki, known as ‘Dadek,’ and Leon, known as ‘Lalek.’ They were beautiful boys, and it was impossible not to fall in love with one of them, especially since they paraded around in the navy-blue capes worn by students of the Gimnazjum Jezuitów (Jesuit College). I fell in love with Andrzej when I was fifteen, the same age as the object of my sighs.”

Andrzej Piórecki dreamed of the boundless sea. In 1938, he left for Gdynia and embarked on his first voyage aboard the *Dar Pomorza*. Then came September 1939, bringing another trial for Karol Piórecki, his sons, and indeed for all Poles. The years of occupation, from 1939 to 1945, were a time of struggle for freedom and, above all, for Poland. Andrzej Piórecki served on the destroyer *ORP Błyskawica*, eventually reaching London. Leon joined the partisan movement in the Vilnius region, fighting alongside Major “Łupaszka.” Mrs. Piórecka was active in the Home Army, while her former husband, Karol Piórecki, was then living in Ostrów Mazowiecka, where he became involved in an underground scouting organization connected with the local commercial school.

It is known that he actively supported the Polish Scouting movement. Drawing on his years of military and wartime experience, he became a symbol and a role model for the youth—a man who, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, had overcome his alcoholism. The scouts’ activities and the subsequent repression are described by Zygmunt Zonik in his book *Wyrwani z szeregów* (Torn from the Ranks):

“They did not spare the scouts. Their troop was quickly uncovered, as early as April 1941, and its young members were arrested. The crackdown was likely the result of betrayal, or rather a denunciation, as the Gestapo ‘picked out’ the boys from a prepared list. In practice, these were almost all the students of the commercial school that had been closed by the Nazi authorities. April 8 was tragically etched into the annals of the town of Ostrów. Those captured included Wojciech Białoskórski, Teofil Bryjniak, Jerzy Flantz, Stanisław Gerszberg, Janusz Hryniewicz, Jerzy Jędrzejczyk, Czesław Kempisty, Zygmunt Kempisty, Jerzy Mierzwiński, Eugeniusz Morawski, Stanisław Nowacki, Kazimierz Piotrowski, Karol Piórecki, Bohdan Płoński, Kazimierz Radwański, Jerzy Rychter, Stanisław Richter, Jerzy Witkowski—almost exclusively scouts. ... All of them endured the horror of interrogations combined with torture in the basements of the local town hall (some sources suggest it was in the local brewery), and on April 12, they were all transported to Pawiak Prison.”

The dark cellars of Pawiak marked the beginning of the most difficult and final trial of Karol Piórecki’s life. On May 29, 1941, twenty men from Ostrów—including Karol Franciszek Piórecki—were deported in a transport of 304 men to the most terrible place on earth: the Auschwitz concentration camp. Stripped of his clothes and his illusions, humiliated to the very limits of human endurance, Major Karol Piórecki became prisoner number 16660.

Major Karol Franciszek Piórecki passed his final examination of life—the ultimate test of survival. Camp records confirm his treatment and medical examinations, including X-ray images that were taken. Unfortunately, on February 28, 1942, he died under circumstances that remain unknown. He was not buried like the soldiers who fell during the May Coup;

“Piórecki’s father was dismissed from active service following yet another stunt. While heavily intoxicated, he climbed onto a hearse and, with the flair of a cavalryman in a major’s uniform, went galloping through the streets.”

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PRZECHOWANE.ORG

The POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews encourages participation in the nationwide initiative przechowane.org. As part of the project, organizers are searching for everyday objects that were once part of Jewish homes.

All it takes is to photograph such an item, briefly describe it, and submit it via the przechowane.org platform. With the help of participants, and in cooperation with the Nomadic Shtetl Archive, these contributions will help create a traveling exhibition of photographs, historical maps, and personal memories documenting Jewish life in prewar Poland.

The przechowane.org project was initiated by an interdisciplinary team of researchers affiliated with Humboldt University of Berlin and the Jagiellonian University, who study the history and memory of Jewish communities in Polish towns. In cooperation with the POLIN Museum, a platform of the same name was established to connect people who preserve in their homes—or have accidentally discovered—objects that once belonged to Polish Jews. Any item can be submitted, even if modest or damaged, provided it helps reconstruct everyday life in a prewar Jewish home, workshop, or shop.

What is the przechowane.org platform?

przechowane.org enables users to upload photographs and descriptions of Jewish objects held in private collections that have never been publicly presented. The organizers aim to “shed light” on ordinary things that may not have high museum value, but are priceless as mementos of people who are no longer here, and as a vital part of the history of those who now safeguard them.

Participants may also contact the research team for help in answering questions about the objects, deciphering inscriptions, or explaining their original function. Items can also be submitted and published anonymously.

Thanks to participants and in cooperation with the Nomadic Shtetl Archive, a traveling exhibition will be created, presenting photographs, historical maps, and memories documenting everyday Jewish life in prewar towns and cities.

How to participate?

The POLIN Museum invites anyone who possesses objects connected to the Polish Jewish community to take part.

To participate:

- take a photograph of the object,
- write a brief description,



Poszewka na poduszkę z Zagłębia Dąbrowskiego

Jedwabna poszewka zdobiona srebrną nicią należała do żydowskiego znajomego Czesława Włodarczyka z Będzina i...



Świece, Józefów

Znalezione w domu należącym przed wojną do Józefa Luchfelda. W 2022 r. przekazane jego córce Beverly.



Maszyna do szycia, Roźniaty

Została oddana na przechowanie przez rodzinę żydowską o nieznanym nazwisku, która była ukrywana w Roźniatcach...



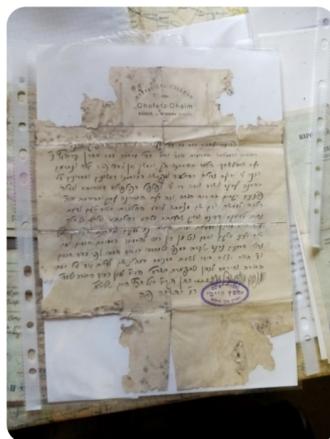
Kafle z rozebranych żydowskich domów w Biłgoraju

W 1939 r., duża część miasteczka spłonęła, a kafle i kafle z częściowo zniszczonych żydowskich domów posłużyły...



Mlecznik, Tykocin

Po wojnie był używany jako stojak na choinkę. Kolekcja Marii Markiewicz.



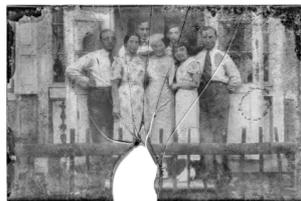
List rabina jesiwy z Radunia (dzisiejsza Białoruś)

Autorem jest Menachem Mendel Josef Zaks, wykładowca jesiwy w Raduniu, polecający tutaj swojego studenta z ...



Lichtarz Herszki, Staszów

Chłopiec imieniem Herszel ukrywał się w czasie we wsi Ogłędów. Został po nim drewniany lichtarz. Los chłopca...



Szklany negatyw, Biłgoraj

Znaleziony na strychu podczas remontu. Przedstawia rodzinę Erbesfeldów, którzy przed wojną mieszkali w tym ...



Serwetka z Bobowej, należąca do rodziny żydowskiej

Przechowana przez koronczarkę z Bobowej – przedwojenną sąsiadkę Żydów.



Szczotka do ubrania, Opatów

Icek Luksemburg wykonał ją dla swojego sąsiada Stefana Sawickiego, wplatając innym kolorem sierści jego in...



Sztućce żydowskich letników z Łodzi

Sztućce żydowskich letników z Łodzi, którzy co roku spędzali wakacje u polskiej rodziny w Orchowiu (pow. Ła...

PISTOL OF MAJOR HENRYK SUCHARSKI

As part of the "Entrance into History" series at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk, visitors can see the pistol that belonged to the commander of the Military Transit Depot at Westerplatte, Major Henryk Sucharski (1898–1946). The weapon is a donation from General Henryk Dziwiętka. In the future, it will be displayed in the new building of the Westerplatte Museum.

The Belgian-made FN Model 1910 pistol, caliber 7.65 mm, belonged to Major Henryk Sucharski. After being liberated from German captivity, he served in the Polish 2nd Corps in Italy from January 25, 1946. Due to his deteriorating health, he was hospitalized from August 19, 1946, in Military Hospital No. 92 in Naples.

At the end of August, he met with a military chaplain, Father Jan Merta (1912–2022), who heard his confession. During their farewell, Sucharski gave the priest the pistol he had used in 1945–1946. Anticipating his death, the major wanted at least his personal weapon to return to Poland.

A few days later, on August 30, 1946, Major Sucharski died. He was buried at the Polish Military Cemetery in Casamassima. The funeral ceremony was conducted by Father Merta, who continued to care for the cemetery until 1968. After returning to Poland, the priest became one of the initiators of the exhumation and transfer of Sucharski's remains to Poland, fulfilling the major's final wish.

In later years, Father Merta lived and served in Przemyśl. He regarded the pistol as his most valuable possession. In 1998, during a Mass marking the 55th anniversary of his priesthood, he presented the pistol to Colonel Henryk Dziwiętka, then commander of the 14th Przemyśl Armored Brigade.

In September 2025, General Henryk Dziwiętka donated the pistol to the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk. The artifact, once belonging to the commander of the Military Transit Depot, will become part of the permanent exhibition in the emerging Westerplatte Museum, a branch of the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk.

"In the life of museum professionals, miracles sometimes happen. The transfer of Major Sucharski's pistol to our collection 80 years after his death would have been difficult to imagine until recently. Our joy is all the greater because Gdańsk is becoming the place where memorabilia of the commander of the peninsula's defense are being consistently gathered. Some of them are already in the collection of the Museum of Gdańsk. Without these objects, building a compelling and meaningful museum narrative about Westerplatte, one of the most important Polish memorials, would be extremely difficult," said Prof. Rafał Wnuk, Director of the Museum.

Until the end of March 2026, as part of the "Entrance into History" series, Major Sucharski's pistol will be displayed in the museum building in



HOLOCAUST HERITAGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY. CALL FOR PAPERS

McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research and online, University of
Cambridge, UK, 7-8 September 2026

This call for papers for a conference, from which invited papers will be published in a handbook on Holocaust heritage, comes at an important juncture in time. 80 years after the Holocaust, as the survivor generation passes away, our attention turns to the sites where Jews were persecuted and murdered. We find that many sites - and with them, Holocaust memory - are facing unprecedented threats. The recently launched International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Charter for Safeguarding Sites (2024) identified 16 types of major threats, risks and challenges to the significance of Holocaust sites in the present. Such threats range from climate change to damage in armed conflict, political misappropriation to inappropriate reuse, and from lack of acknowledgement to lack of heritage legislation protection.

The aims of the conference and resulting handbook are not only to document the state of Holocaust sites and sites of the genocide of the Roma at this major anniversary, but to showcase good practice solutions as well as drawing attention to the loss, damage and destruction of other sites. This handbook will reflect on the (potential) uses of the IHRA Charter and will reflect the situation at the range of Holocaust sites listed in the Charter, such as mass graves, killing sites, concentration camps, labour camps, forced march routes, ghettos, sites of so-called 'euthanasia' and medical experimentation (etc), and to provide coverage of sites across Europe and further afield today. We welcome theoretical approaches as well as the more practical (and the digital), and equally value papers that focus on individual or multiple case studies, or situations across entire regions or countries.

It is intended that the conference in Cambridge will result in a major handbook on Holocaust heritage to be edited by Professor Gilly Carr (University of Cambridge, UK), Dr Steve Cooke (Executive Director of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Australia), Tali Nates (Director of the Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre), and Dr Alexandra Janus (ESHM). The handbook will include papers by academics, heritage professionals and practitioners, Holocaust site managers and directors, activists, NGOs, and stakeholders. The approach will be interdisciplinary, with perspectives from archaeologists, historians, and those working in heritage studies, Holocaust studies and memory studies. It is intended that this handbook will be a state-of-the-art publication at this important juncture in time.

Taking the IHRA Charter as our point of departure, we welcome papers on themes including (but not restricted to):

- The state / status of sites of Holocaust heritage in the 21st century in Europe today
- Theoretical and / or practical approaches to Holocaust heritage
- Intangible Holocaust heritage
- Major well-known sites or lesser-known small sites
- The temporary, transient and ephemeral sites
- The 'lost' / unmarked sites

“Safeguard the historical record of the Holocaust, the genocide of the Roma, and the persecution of other victims by Nazi Germany and those fascist and extreme nationalist partners and other collaborators who participated in these crimes.”

2020 IHRA Ministerial Declaration, Article 9

This call for papers for a conference, from which invited papers will be published in a handbook on Holocaust heritage, comes at an important juncture in time. 80 years after the Holocaust, as the survivor generation passes away, our attention turns to the sites where Jews were persecuted and murdered. We find that many sites - and with them, Holocaust memory - are facing unprecedented threats. The recently launched International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Charter for Safeguarding Sites (2024) identified 16 types of major threats, risks and challenges to the significance of Holocaust sites in the present. Such threats range from climate change to damage in armed conflict, political misappropriation to inappropriate reuse, and from lack of acknowledgement to lack of heritage legislation protection.

The aims of the conference and resulting handbook are not only to document the state of Holocaust sites and sites of the genocide of the Roma at this major anniversary, but to showcase good practice solutions as well as drawing attention to the loss, damage and destruction of other sites. This handbook will reflect on the (potential) uses of the IHRA Charter and will reflect the situation at the range of Holocaust sites listed in the Charter, such as mass graves, killing sites, concentration camps, labour camps, forced march routes, g, medical experimentation (etc), and to provide further afield today. We welcome theoretical (and the digital), and equally value papers th

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