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"The entire modern world is now living more and more as if they have not learned much from the tragedy of the Shoah and concentration camps"—wrote the director of the Auschwitz Memorial Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński in a special article for the 73rd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. "What is happening to our world? What is happening to us? Has the memory ceased to constitute a commitment?"—he asked.

Preserving Memory is a mission, a commitment and a great responsibility. Continuous work of educators around the world who teach about human tragedies from the World War II period, who look at history in an honest and objective way, is an incredibly difficult, but very needed task. In our times we need to remember that building bridges between people takes a long time and their destruction can take only a moment.

In February edition of "Memoria" we write about events of the 73rd anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, about amazing work of French organization Yahad - In Unum that documents traces of mass executions of Jews and Roma killed by Germans in Eastern Europe and identifies their execution sites, an ERIAC conference dedicated to Roma memory, about Auschwitz testimonies in the database "Chronicles of Terror" created by the Witold Pilecki Center for Totalitarian Studies, exhibition of photographs and film from the Holocaust at Yad Vashem, as well as new initiative of SWPS University in Warsaw—the Centre for Economics of Memorial Sites.

I also encourage all our readers to co-operate with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we could write about. We also accept proposals for articles. Please do share information about this magazine with others, particularly via social media.

Our e-mail: memoria@auschwitz.org

All editions: memoria.auschwitz.org
'From the Heart of Hell: Manuscripts of a Sonderkommando Prisoner, Found in Auschwitz' is a shattering testimony of the extermination of Jews at the German Nazi Auschwitz camp. The text of manuscripts created by Zalmen Gradowski has also been published in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish, and is based on a new translation from Yiddish.

In December 1942, Zalmen Gradowski, a young man with literary talent, was deported by the Germans from the Grodno ghetto to Auschwitz, along with his whole family. His closest relatives, including his parents and wife, perished in the gas chambers immediately after arrival at the camp. He himself was sent to the very heart of hell – to the Sonderkommando. Before he perished during the revolt in October 1944, he wrote and hid his two manuscripts in the ground.

The book is available in:

- ENGLISH
- FRENCH
- GERMAN
- ITALIAN
- POLISH
- SPANISH
The Holocaust Research Institute at Royal Holloway, University of London, invites applications for its Summer Institute on the Holocaust and Jewish Civilisation (2 – 11 July 2018). It is primarily aimed at PhD students and early career researchers. This programme is generously sponsored by the Holocaust Educational Foundation, Northwestern University, USA, and Pears Foundation.

More Details

Arpad Weisz remains a victim of history. When it came to football, however, he was a great protagonist. He helped develop the game into what we know today. Through his work and innovations, he turned his tragic story into an eternal one, cementing his legacy in the face of oppression and death.

More Details

The letters featured in Yad Vashem's 'Last Letters from the Holocaust: 1943' exhibition were sent from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Germany, Holland, Greece, Poland, France and Russia. These letters only allowed few words, and mostly one phrase: ‘We are well.’

Visit Online Exhibition

The fifth edition of 'Holocaust Memorial Days: An overview of remembrance and education in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Region' provides information on when, where, and how OSCE participating states promote the commemoration and study of the Holocaust and the extermination and persecution of Roma and Sinti in line with their OSCE commitments.

Read the Report
On January 27, 2018 more than 60 Auschwitz survivors met at the site of the former Birkenau camp to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda assumed honorary patronage of the event.
The eyewitnesses of history were accompanied by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki; Deputy Prime Minister Beata Szydło; representatives of the Polish Government; Greek Minister of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media Nikolas Pappas; ambassadors and diplomats; representatives of the religious clergy; regional authorities; local authorities; and employees of various museums and memorials, among others.

In 2018, we commemorate the 75th anniversary of the commissioning of four huge gas chambers and crematoria at the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp. Consequently, the visual symbol of the anniversary will be a painting by a former Sonderkommando prisoner, David Olère, who presented the tragedy of people being murdered in the gas chambers in his post-war paintings and drawings.

During the commemorative event two Auschwitz survivors, Maria Hörl and Bronisława Karakulska, took the floor.

Maria Hörl was born in 1942 as Galina Bułchakowa. In June 1943 she and her family were arrested during pacification of Belarussian villages. She was deported to Auschwitz together with her mother and three siblings from Majdanek camp on 15 April 1944.

"I did not find any information about my sister's stay, what she looked like, what was happening to her in the camp. Maybe we were not together. It is only a fact that on January 19th 1945 she was alive. This was the last time Mother saw us, because she could see us only once a week and it was for about half an hour. Mother was sent to Ravensbrück. From there straight to Russia," she said.

Galina was liberated on January 27, 1945 and then taken to an orphanage. "From the camp we were transported to Harbutowitz. I did not know about it for many years. As late as the first meeting with other Auschwitz children I got to know about it from older members. Our first meeting was organized by a Memorial curator, Tadeusz Szymański. He started searching for documents concerning Auschwitz children. Thanks to him we could get information about our past," she continued. In 1947 she was adopted by a married couple from Kraków. She found her real family dozens of years later.

Bronisława Karakulska (nee Horowitz) was born in Kraków in 1932. During the occupation she stayed with her parents and brother Ryszard in the Kraków Ghetto. After the ghetto was liquidated, she was transferred to KL Plaszów and then employed in Oskar Schindler's Enamel Works factory in Zabłocie. In October 1944, together with other female prisoners on "Schindler's List", she was taken to Auschwitz and then deported to Brünnlitz, where she stayed until liberation.

"During my stay in Auschwitz, I was saved twice during the selection for the crematorium. The first time I was saved thanks to swallowing a diamond which my mother then gave Aufseherin Orlowski. The second time my aunt saved me. I was hidden in a copper coal furnace, where I stayed for almost two hours. I owe the fact that I was saved from Auschwitz to Oskar Schindler, who convinced Kommandant Höss that women and children were needed as workers in his factory. As of today, I am the only survivor saved by Oskar Schindler living in Kraków," she said.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said that German crimes committed at Auschwitz were crimes during which the concept of evil and hatred were...
were raised to a completely different level, previously unknown. "This evil, in its purest form, was directed against a man, directed against other nations. People who were brought here were to be deprived of humanity. Humanity was not to be present here. And in some sense it was not. And I am not talking about those people who were deprived of this humanity: not Jews, not Poles, not Roma, not Russians, only those who committed this horrible crime. They deprived themselves of the humanity," the Prime Minister said.

"This terrible crime that took place then, apart from separating itself from the world with barbed wire and a high wall, at the same time was also separated by ideology. Terrible, dark, horrifying, Hitlerian, Nazi ideology. Therefore, now there is not the slightest consent to any criminal ideologies, such as German Nazism or communism. And there is no room for racism, antisemitism, for any such behavior. That is why we will remember all the mechanisms of death that were used then, because we owe this memory today to the living, but we also owe this memory to the victims of those times," he emphasized.

"In the face of such a tragedy as the Shoah, all politicians and rulers, but also all citizens, should ask - what comes next? What comes next? And the answer to this question is at the same time very difficult and very easy. We all should fight and care for the truth, for justice and we should give hope to the world hope," concluded Prime Minister Morawiecki.

Minister Wojciech Kolarski from the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland said: "In the name of universal human heritage and future, we, the Poles, will always cherish the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and testify about German crimes. From the very beginning we tried to alert the free world and reveal the truth about the Holocaust. The brave activity of Witold Pilecki and the mission of Jan Karski are examples of the commitment of the Polish Underground State. The rescue was carried out by the Council for Aid to the Jews - "Żegota" - operating by the Government Delegation to Poland. Then and today we remember that three million people murdered during the Holocaust - almost half of all its victims - were citizens of the Polish Republic, our fellow citizens."
"Poles and Jews are exceptional custodians of the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and depositories of the message that comes from this tragedy for the international community. Many people, communities and institutions fulfill these tasks with great dedication, with prominent institutions such as the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which has developed universal principles of preserving sites of extermination, and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem." he added.

Israeli ambassador Anna Azari, referring to the changes that have been introduced to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland which, she noted, has caused controversies in Israel, said: "I hope that as always, as good friends, Poland and Israel will find their way and a common language of remembering history together. Let us remember all those murdered in the Holocaust. Israel understands who built KL Auschwitz and who built other camps. Everyone knows that it was not built by Poles."

The Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Sergey Andreyev, said: "Auschwitz is the place where the cruel tragedy of the past should constitute a strict lesson for the current and future generations, where permanent immunity for the disease of historical amnesia should be produced. Here there should not be any doubts concerning the differentiation between the oppressors, the victims and the liberators. Let the frenzy of Auschwitz never happen again. Let the sky of peace dominate over us all."

The Director of the Auschwitz Memorial Dr Piotr M. A. Cywiński emphasized that "the entire modern world is now living more and more as if they have not learned much from the tragedy of the Shoah and concentration camps"

"We are unable to efficiently react to new manifestations of genocidal frenzy. Starvation and death caused by continuous fights do not motivate our institutions and societies to act efficiently. The arms trade and exploitation of practically free labor overwhelm the poorest regions of the world," he said, adding; "At the same time, our democracies suffer from the increase in populism, national egotism, new
forms of extreme hate speech. The remilitarization of relationships between the people desecrates our streets and cities. Brown-shirt like groups profane our streets and cities. Did we really change so much within these two or three generations?"

"What is happening to our world? What is happening to us? Has the memory ceased to constitute a commitment? And if it is hope which dies last, then where else is it to be rooted if not in memory? In a culture which tries to live without being conscious of death, is there still any place for the commemoration of victims?" said Dr. Cywiński.

"We do not want to answer these questions ourselves, it is easier to put them away, ridicule or discredit them. And it does not matter what is happening in Congo, Myanmar or in a neighboring district or stadium," he stressed.

The second part of the ceremony took place at the Memorial to the Victims on the site of the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp. The rabbis and clergy of various Christian denominations jointly read Psalm 42 from the Second Book of Psalms, and participants of the ceremony placed grave candles at the monument commemorating the victims of Auschwitz.

Earlier in the day, survivors and the management and employees of the Auschwitz Memorial laid wreaths in the courtyard of Block 11 in Auschwitz I. On the occasion of the anniversary an exhibition was opened in the temporary exhibition hall in Block 12 in Auschwitz I entitled 'Letters...Collection of Władysław Rath'. The exhibition presented a fragment of a large collection of documents related to Auschwitz and the history of World War II, ghettos and other concentration camps. It was created by Holocaust survivor Władysław Rath and handed over to the Museum by his family last year.

Before the liberation of the camp sites by soldiers of the Red Army, German Nazis murdered approximately 1.1 million people in Auschwitz, mostly Jews, but also Poles, the Roma, Soviet prisoners of war and people of other nationalities. Auschwitz is for the world today, a symbol of the Holocaust and atrocities of World War II. In 2005, the United Nations adopted January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day.
JANUARY 27, 2018.
PART I. OFFICIAL EVENT.

JANUARY 27, 2018.
PART II. MONUMENT.
"WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO US?"

For the 73rd anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi Auschwitz camp the Director of the Memorial wrote an article that was published in many European newspapers.

The text appeared in printed or/and online version of the following newspapers: “Le Soir” (Belgium), "Hospodářské noviny" (Czechia), "Le Monde" (France), "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (Germany), "Népszava" (Hungary), "Haaretz" (Israel), "La Repubblica" (Italy), "Gazeta Wyborcza" (Poland) "Kommiersant" (Russia), "SME" (Slovakia), "El Pais" (Spain), "La Liberté" (Switzerland) and "Népszava" (Hungary).

73 years ago, the remaining seven thousand KL Auschwitz prisoners were liberated by the Red Army. Right before their escape, the Germans blew up the gas chambers and crematoria which were still operational. They managed to evacuate over 100,000 prisoners deep into Germany in order to continue using them as a slave labour force. Those who survived spent all their lives as witnesses for those who perished.

Today, Primo Levi, Elie Wiesel, Władysław Bartoszewski, Israel Gutman, Simone Veil, Imre Kertész and many others are no longer among the living. We, the post-war generation, remain more and more lonesome with the burden of their experience and it would be difficult to deny that we are still unable to manage this burden properly. And I am not referring to facts here. The entire modern world is now living more and more as if they have not learned much from the tragedy of the Shoah and the concentration camps.

And the entire world was supposed to look different after the war. Dialogue and co-operation institutions, such as the United Nations, were being built on a global scale. In Western Europe the process of the states, nations and societies coming together developed to a great extent, and it is now known as the European Union. This organism was created in place of past models of co-existence formed around the illusive balance of power, and made the co-operation and developing interdependence of its member states its main foundations.

New legal frameworks of crimes against humanity were accepted and the UN drew up a definition of the crime of genocide. The role of non-governmental organizations was appreciated and their full expansion after the war enhanced the influence of civil society on governmental institutions. The shape of those self-styled social structures no longer imitated the paramilitary culture that was so common before the war among different kinds of brotherhoods, corporations and associations.

The Church and other religious organizations felt the new spirit of ecumenism. After the war, it seemed that the world would have to be re-thought. Due to the tragedy of the loss of so many civilians, this war was not like any other war. Auschwitz became its most prominent symbol.

But at the time, there was not enough courage for real justice. Among approximately 70,000 SS men working in concentration and extermination camps, only about 1,650 were punished after the war. Furthermore, the punishment was, in the majority of cases, irritatingly and obviously not enough – a few years of imprisonment, often suspended. It should thus not surprise anybody that many of them later shared the feeling of impunity...
Today we see that these post-war efforts – however legitimate and well thought-out they seem – do not withstand the test of time. We are unable to efficiently react to new manifestations of genocidal frenzy. Starvation and death caused by continuous fights between different groups in central Africa are not treated as priorities by our governments.

The arms trade and exploitation of practically free labour overwhelm the poorest regions of the world. The United Nations has ceased to guarantee any kind of hope. The European Union is devoured by internal apathy. At the same time, our democracies suffer from an increase in populism, national egotism and new forms of extreme hate speech. The remilitarization of relationships between people desecrates our streets and cities. Have we really changed that much in the last two or three generations?

Before we meet in two years’ time, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz (constituting the culminating point of the 15th International Holocaust Remembrance Day) we should ask ourselves several questions to ensure this day does not become yet another commemorative event, with the same words and phrases being repeated, taking the form of slogans movingly placed within the familiar shots of outlines of camp architecture.

What is happening to our world? What is happening to us? Has the memory ceased to constitute a commitment? And if it is hope which dies last, then where else is it to be rooted if not in memory? Do we really have to complain about a lack of vision in order to justify our shallowness in reinforcing the good? Does lack of authority justify the promotion of vanity? Should the lack of statesmen allow for the emergence of voices that are not mature enough to handle their own responsibility?

Have the results of opinion polls and social media memes become a permanent dictate of our choices? Does the market really need only those who are convinced of their inherent right to convenience and who do not realize that they also have duties, however uncomfortable they are? Are we really able to smother the feelings of our objective and tangible responsibilities so efficiently, sitting peacefully behind the door of our “incapacity to do anything” even with respect to the biggest tragedies?

In a culture which tries to live
without being conscious of death, is there still any place for the commemoration of victims? Does the cacophony of individual and equally important stories – to which everyone is naturally entitled – still entail a liberating moral message? Does the total of human self-satisfaction constitute the most efficient measure of good in this world?

Seeing, at a glance, how absurdly unmatched to modern challenges education has become, why are we unable to change its meaning? Is the proportion between the number of lessons like Mathematics compared to classes such as Ethics; the knowledge of using mass media wisely; Civics and the knowledge of internal threats for society; the ability to organize civil opposition; the skills to create aid projects – really justified? Do we really want to build our future on integrals so much? Why does the history we teach remain only a safe study of the past, whilst matching all present circumstances, without presenting any distinct correlations with the current world and the increasingly insecure future?

We do not want to answer these questions ourselves, so it is easier to put them away, ridicule or discredit them.
And it does not matter what is happening in Congo, Myanmar or in a neighboring district or stadium.

This does not change the fact that our children – who seem the future of everything we should care for – learn more about sacrifice, dignity, responsibility or ideals from the new ‘Star Wars' film than from ourselves or at school. Apathy has embraced us not because we do not see great visions for the future, but because we have veiled the image of our shared, common – even the closest – past.

This apathy is so deep that today – maybe for the first time in the history of mankind – while assessing the course of events in so many places, distant and close to us, it is so difficult for us to distinguish what still constitutes peace from what has already become war.

Memory and responsibility do not match anymore. This is how our entire civilization is now, at its own request, deprived of its own experience. Are we going to let Auschwitz become part of History? Or should we perhaps move it to the Mathematics section?
EXPOSING EVIDENCE OF THE HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS

Yahad - In Unum led the first "Holocaust By Bullets Training for Guides" at the Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum

Since 2004, the researchers of Yahad - In Unum have investigated the mass shootings of Jews in Eastern Europe. In January 2018, Patrice Bensimon, Research Director of the organization, and Michał Chojak, Deputy Research Director, came to Oświęcim to conduct an extensive training program focusing on the "Holocaust by Bullets" for the guides of the Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum. The event was inaugurated by a lecture by Father Desbois, Founder of Yahad - In Unum.

Yahad - In Unum (YIU) combines the Hebrew word Yahad, which means "together", with the Latin phrase In Unum, which means "in one." Founded in 2004 by Catholic priest Father Patrick Desbois, the organization is dedicated to systematically documenting the mass executions of Jews and Roma killed by German units in Eastern Europe during World War II and identifying the execution sites of the victims.

After in-depth archival research within the Soviet and German archives, YIU researchers move to the field in Eastern Europe, travelling from village to village to seek out witnesses to the Nazi atrocities, film interviews, document the events and locate mass graves of Jews and Roma people. The objective of this work is to record and document the "Holocaust by Bullets" or the mass executions of Jews that happened outside Nazi concentration camps; provide evidence of mass executions to negate modern-day Holocaust denial; provide dignity and respect to the victims' burial places and enable their preservation; disseminate and educate on the universal lessons about genocide derived from the work of YIU.

Yahad-In Unum's ongoing research on crimes against the Jews and Roma in Eastern Europe during World War II has uncovered the location of more than 2,365 killing sites, which was made possible through interviews with more than 5,728 witnesses. To date, the organization has conducted 135 investigation trips across 8 countries: Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Lithuania and Republic of Macedonia.

In 2015, Yahad - In Unum went to Iraqi Kurdistan to interview Yazidi victims of ISIS, who have been persecuted since the invasion of the Sinjar Mountains in August 2014. A YIU team collects the testimonies of survivors to document evidence of every step of the Yazidi genocide.

The Holocaust by Bullets

More than 2 million Jews were killed by German units in the occupied territories of Soviet Union between 1941 and 1944, mostly during mass shooting operations. This criminal method of murder by special firing squads has come to be known as the “Holocaust by bullets.” The systematic killing of Jews started throughout the former Soviet Union from June 1941, before the creation of the death camps, and continued despite the existence of the gas chambers. While Auschwitz has become a symbol of the Holocaust, the stories of thousands of Jewish communities from former Soviet territories killed in mass graves remain less known.

"The entire first phase of the Shoah, which took place on the occupied eastern territories of the Republic of Poland, nowadays mainly part of Belarus and Ukraine, has been for decades - especially in Western Europe - much less known than the horrors committed in extermination centers such as Birkenau, Treblinka or Belżec. In fact, a large part of this memory survived in documents, letters and the memories of Jewish..."
The executions mainly took place on the outskirts of the towns and villages, in front of non-Jewish local inhabitants. Some of the witnesses are still alive and they have agreed to give their testimony. Those interviewed by YIU in Eastern Europe were, at the time, curious teenagers, neighbors, forced spectators, or requisitioned by Germans and local authorities to perform various tasks in the shooting process (digging the graves, burying the corpses, collecting the clothes of the victims etc.). YIU team members interview as many witnesses as they can in the framework of a police investigation, and reconstruct the different steps of the killing and the crime scene. The methodology of YIU depends on cross-referencing between archives and testimonies, and between the testimonies themselves. The majority of mass graves located by the organization communities in these areas. Memory also survived among the local people who live there - Ukrainians, Belarusians and Poles. Using this local memory for historical research has been a great undertaking of the team led by Father Patrick Desbois for many years,” explains Piotr Cywinski, the Director of Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

A methodology of investigation

The field trips led by Yahad - In Unum require a significant amount of research within the German and the Soviet archives beforehand. The archives yield a wealth of information on the mass shootings perpetrated against Jews and on the location of the killing sites. After this documentation process, teams of 11 people (researchers, investigators, a photographer, translators and a cameraman) are sent to Eastern Europe to interview eyewitnesses to these crimes and to locate the mass graves of the victims. The work done by YIU rests upon on the assumption that the mass shootings of Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators were not done in secret. These crimes were often conducted in public, in broad daylight.
have been completely forgotten, without protection or memorial. The last persons who know where the victims were buried are the eyewitnesses, of whom there are ever fewer due to their age. In their late 80s or 90s today, they are slowly passing away, the memory of the victims disappearing with them. YIU plans to lead 20 research trips to Eastern Europe in 2018.

Exposing evidence of the crimes

From January 15 to January 19, 2018, YIU researchers came to Oświęcim to conduct a week long “Holocaust By Bullets Training” program specially designed for the guides of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The event was opened by Father Desbois. “This method of killing Jewish men, women and children, village by village, and leaving them in mass graves was systematically employed by the Nazis in Eastern Europe. Each killer saw his victim, each victim saw his killer,” explained Father Desbois. “Unfortunately, this is the same method being used today in the mass crimes which continue to take lives of innocent groups of people across the world”. After the opening lecture, Patrice Bensimon, YIU Research Director, Michał Chojak, YIU Deputy Research Director - who between them have interviewed thousands of eyewitnesses to the Holocaust by Bullets - and Renata Skuńczyk, YIU educator, provided a series of presentations and workshops focusing on the mass killings of Jews perpetrated by German mobile units in former Soviet territories after the launch of Operation Barbarossa.

During the training, the guides became familiar with the particular investigative methodology of the organization and had the opportunity to learn directly from the archival sources and the collection of testimonies recorded by Yahad teams in the field. The work around the crimes perpetrated in thousands of villages, towns and cities, was the core of the training program created by YIU. Throughout the week-long program different topics were discussed, ranging from the chronology of the Holocaust by Bullets to the photographs of the genocide, from the geography of the massacres to the different stages of the crime. 130 guides of the Museum took part in Level I of the training and had the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on the mass shootings of over 2 million Jews by mobile Nazi death squads and their collaborators in Eastern Europe.
"It is incredible that Yahad is still meeting witnesses to these crimes. I thought it would be impossible after so many years. I knew about the victims, about their point of view, about Auschwitz. But I never thought the shootings happened on such a huge scale and in such a public way. I thought these executions were done in secret. As you said, what was public came to be hidden and what was supposed to be secret here in Auschwitz, is now well known," said Wojciech, a participant. Level II and Level III of the training for the museum guides are already planned for 2019 and 2020.

**Holocaust education and genocide prevention**

With the spread of violent extremist ideologies and genocide in several parts of the world, education has become a priority for Yahad - In Unum. Over the last few years, the organization has undertaken different educational initiatives aimed at teaching the history of the Holocaust and to prevent genocide and mass violence in the future. In 2016, Yahad expanded the dissemination of its research results and education programs to Central America by opening the Holocaust Museum in Guatemala, the first of its kind in Central America.
Guatemala, the first of its kind in Central America. In parallel to its exhibitions, which allow visitors to learn from the past through a series of galleries and installations, the museum hosts workshops and seminars for teachers and scholars aiming to transmit the knowledge and educational tools required for Holocaust education. In partnership with the Guatemalan Ministry of Education, YIU has started a large educational campaign in which the Holocaust by Bullets exhibition will travel throughout Guatemala providing a vital pedagogical experience to young people who would otherwise have had little access to such information. A teacher-training program will accompany each exhibit. So far, over 550 teachers participated in the workshops and 50,000 students from public and private schools have visited the exhibition.

In 2017, Yahad-In Unum signed a partnership agreement with UNESCO to strengthen co-operation between the two organizations in the field of Holocaust and genocide education. The organizations will work together, mostly in the Latin America and Caribbean regions, presenting the “Holocaust by Bullets” exhibition, displayed for the first time at the UNESCO Headquarters in January 2015 and placed thereafter under

Mass grave at Krasnodar Ladojskaia
UNESCO patronage. They will also join efforts to organize an international symposium on Holocaust education and research that will take place in May 2018 at the Holocaust Museum of Guatemala.

In October 2017, as part of its efforts to increase international awareness of the Yazidi genocide, YIU opened its exhibit “Daesh’s Crimes Against the Yazidis: The Survivors Speak” at the United Nations headquarters in New York. The photo exhibition took a deeper look at the crimes committed by ISIS against the Yazidi minority group by following the witness testimonies gathered by Yahad’s Action Yazidis initiative in refugee camps in Iraqi Kurdistan.

YIU has developed various educational programs across Europe, similar to the training program organized for the guides of Auschwitz Museum in January. In December 2017, in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Center of Budapest, YIU travelled to Hungary for the first time to conduct two days of intense seminars focusing on the Holocaust by Bullets for high school teachers and Holocaust educators from Hungary, Romania and Croatia. For the last five years, YIU and the Mémorial de Caen Museum have hosted a three-day seminar for European history teachers on “The Holocaust by Bullets” and persecution of the Roma in Eastern Europe. Applications for the next seminar, that will be held in Paris and Caen in November 2018, will be soon opened online.

Yahad - In Unum
135 field trips
Across 8 countries
5,728 testimonies of eyewitnesses
2,365 killing sites located

www.yahadinunum.org
www.yahadmap.org
In January 2018, the Research Centre for Economics of Memorial Sites was established at the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw, the task of which is to conduct academic research in the area of economics, finance and management of the proper establishment, functioning and preservation of memorial sites around the world. The Head of the Centre is Adam Szpaderski, Associate Professor of Management at SWPS University.

Due to the innovative nature of the research conducted, and the socio-economic importance of problems addressed, the Centre has the unique opportunity of becoming a leading research centre on a national and ultimately international scale, as well as provide conditions for the creation of a platform for cooperation and exchange of experience between representatives of academic communities, states, businesses and non-governmental organisations working for the preservation of Memorial Sites.

The comprehensive and multifaceted international research centre will primarily include memorial sites of former Nazi Germany concentration camps, extermination centres and the largest places of mass execution in such countries as Austria, Belgium, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Germany, Norway, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Hungary and Italy. In further stages, the research will be extended to include other memorial sites around the world.

Paweł Sawicki spoke to the head of the Centre, Professor Adam Szpaderski, about the idea and challenges of the Research Centre for Economics of Memorial Sites.

I would like to begin with a question about the idea. Why was it created and why do we need a new research centre related to the economic and organisational analysis of the functioning of memorial sites?

Until now, this has been an unexplored topic. I conducted a preliminary library survey of Anglo-Saxon academic literature on economy and finance from the last 40 years, and this issue was practically nowhere to be found. When we talk about memorial sites, it is usually about research in cultural, historical and partly political studies. The sphere of economic sciences is untouched. Practice, however, shows that this “branch” is functioning; it has a high turnover, and there is a social need for the revenue of these places, and the accomplishment of a social mission regarding the preservation of cultural heritage requires considerable outlays. Long-term conservation on the premises of the Auschwitz II-Birkenau
The first reason for creating the Centre is therefore academic; the second is practical. Today, we observe in various countries the strengthening of prerogatives concerning the preservation of memorial sites. However, we see imperfections in their funding. There is a need to preserve and strengthen memorial sites, but there is no fiscal policy behind it that would create incentives for donors. In the United States, the entire fund-raising culture and systems of tax exemption are well-developed and well-established, whereas, in other countries with a strong memory prerogative, the fiscal policy is unfavourable. If someone wants to allocate a substantial amount for such support, he or she will not deduct it from the tax. In my opinion, this may discourage donors. If my research were to show that the tax issue should be devised to be more pro-exempting, it would be a lasting contribution to the problem.

The dynamics of co-operation between states and private and non-governmental sectors for the preservation of memorial sites is also completely unexplored. There are several co-operation models in the world - it depends on the host of a given memorial, the self-government and non-government culture functions in a particular country, the historical determinants and so on. There is a need for international comparative research and the creation of a set of good practices.

What will be your primary task from the onset?

A significant challenge for me will be the organisation of the International Scientific Congress for Memorial Sites at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum in 2019. It is about the integration of communities and an attempt to answer the question: what are the good practices in preserving memorial sites? Prior to the commencement of the congress, participants will be able to see what conservation works are in practice in preserving the authenticity of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial. We very much want to see the presence of representatives of memorial sites from all over the world, and therefore are intensifying activities in this area. In addition, we wish to commence work on the creation of a scientific, economic doctrine of memorial sites, which through co-operation with leaders of certain circles - directors, fundraisers, donors and leaders of memorial sites - could be a set of good practices in handling the economic, financial and management aspects of memorial sites. We will also need to create performance indicators for the functioning of memorial sites. If a donor contributes money, he or she will probably want it to be well-invested. The measurability of investment efficiency is, in this case, a big problem because there is a conflict between two values - financial and social. The financial value aids the implementation of the social mission. How do you measure it? There are already some pilot studies that try to use Porter’s Value Chain, but the margin, in this case, will be the implementation of certain social objectives, a specific social surplus. Therefore, it will not be restricted to economic research but also interdisciplinary research.

These two aspects are very difficult to connect. In the case of conservation, it is still quite simple because we have a certain amount of...
money and the result will be a secured facility. But what do we do when we talk about preserving memory, education, symbolic layers? It is an elusive notion.

Research is only just beginning. It seems, however, that some indirect measures are possible. Let us take a look at places of former Nazi Germany concentration camps and extermination centres. These are authentic spaces. Authenticity must be preserved, which of course is expensive but provides for effective education. It seems that conservation projects may be combined with educational projects. To investigate how the preservation of authenticity affects the effectiveness of education, one may try to find a common denominator. We cannot provide a simple mathematical formula today, and therefore interdisciplinary research must be conducted. There are financial flows, and where they exist, there must also be a measure. If we find it, it will have a practical effect - donors will easily take decisions to support if they can see tangible results, and memorial sites will find it easier to obtain these funds.

You speak of the search for good practices. Where do you see such practices today in the world, that deserve focus? Where do you see activities that deserve attention?

One need not look far - I have just completed a series of pilot studies at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. I consider the cooperation of these two institutions as a groundbreaking case study of good practices. It is about their unique organisational, managerial and fundraising approach to securing the conservation of authenticity from the financial perspective. What we have here is a Perpetual Capital, which is a certain financial “perpetuum mobile”, with full transparency towards donors and a controlling strategy implemented through an International Committee and a Financial Committee. Another good practice is that 100% of the funds transferred by the donor goes to the capital because the Foundation’s operational activities are financed from dividends. It is a phenomenon. I think it is also a practice that makes a considerable impression on donors. As a rule, organisations allocate part of the donation to operational functioning. Another unique aspect is the cooperation model between the Foundation and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which cares for the authenticity of the memorial site. Such a relationship does not exist, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for example, which is not the same kind of place. It borrows and collects authentic objects. There, we will be able to analyse other good practices related to the sphere of social commitment, for example, in the analysis of contemporary conflicts etc. I am only mentioning examples of good practices. I will present a more comprehensive and systematic picture in a book about the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, which I am currently writing.

The field of research is fascinating. However, I can imagine that some people may have
certain reservations here because when we talk about memorial sites, the words “management”, “finance” and “economics” do not quite fit. Are you not worried that this may be a mental barrier that is difficult to overcome?

In the beginning, I was afraid of controversies and conflicts between the order of the economic research and that of the memory of dreadful crimes. Therefore, first of all, I consulted with the leaders of memorial sites and academic circles. When I start talking about numbers and explaining that the financial resources are required to secure the huge social values, by presenting specific amounts, then this controversy diminishes immediately. I think these fears stem from the fact that the economic aspect of the preservation of the relics of crimes against humanity is a new subject, so far managed almost exclusively by the humanities and social sciences. Due to its innovativeness, it raises certain controversies - however, associating figures with the social mission raises understanding. It is very simple - memorial sites serve as a warning to us all, so that such crimes may never occur again. However, for this warning to be audible and legible, these sites must be preserved, and to preserve them, financial resources are necessary. This cause-and-effect thinking convinces people. We must understand that valuable things are expensive. Authenticity is one thing, but we still have education, multimedia etc. The world is moving forward, and this cannot be done in an ascetic form because it will not reach people, in particular the youth. Therefore, we need modern technologies, which are not cheap. The talks resulted in co-operation and substantive patronage of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation and the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo. So far, the comments are very positive.

This interest is demonstrated by the fact that such an important university as the SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities has established an institution dedicated to the study of the economics of memorial sites.

Yes, I hope to interest a significant number of researchers and practitioners to the issue of the economics of memorial sites. The Research Centre for Economics of Memorial Sites also has an integrative value in relation to other sciences. More and more researchers from various disciplines deal with memory, which is why we want to create an integration platform for the scientific community. Everyone can contribute their bit, and the social value of memorial sites is worth such co-operation. I am delighted that people want to participate in this project.

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EUROPEAN ROMA INSTITUTE FOR ARTS AND CULTURE (ERIAC) DISCUSSES THE FUTURE OF ROMA HISTORY

In the framework of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC)’s International Cultural Outreach Program, a two-day event “The Future of Roma History: Remembrance, Historical Justice and the Role of Roma Youth” took place in Kraków from February 1-2, 2018.

Three parallel components, all open to the public with free admission, comprised the event: the exhibition “The Rights to Look”, curated by Delaine Le Bas and Wojciech Szymański; an international expert conference “The Future of Roma History: Remembrance, Historical Justice and the Role of Roma Youth”; and workshops for high-school students about Roma by Roma youth activists Noemi and Delfín Łakatosz.

The ERIAC initiated its international activities with the International Cultural Outreach Program, supported by the Federal Foreign Office of the German government. In the framework of the program, seven international events took place between January and February 2018 (in Sevilla, Kraków, Budapest, Prague, Rome, Bucharest and Berlin). The aim of the International Outreach Program was to introduce the ERIAC to diverse audiences in places outside of the ERIAC’s headquarters in Berlin and to ensure a bottom-up formation of the strategic directions of the organization based on Roma leadership. The outreach program served to build up enthusiasm and mobilize support for the ERIAC among Roma and non-Roma individuals, communities and institutions.

Launched in Berlin in June 2017, the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERIAC) is a joint initiative of the Council of Europe, the Open Society Foundations, and the Alliance for the European Roma Institute. Its mission is to increase the self-esteem of Roma and to decrease negative prejudice of the majority of the population towards the Roma by means of arts, culture, history and media. The ERIAC acts as an international creative hub to support the exchange of creative ideas across borders, cultural domains and Romani identities. The ERIAC aims to be the promoter of Romani contributions to European culture and talent, success and achievement, as well as to document the historical experience of Romani people in Europe.
Within the framework of the ERIAC’s International Cultural Outreach Program, the international event “The Future of Roma History: Remembrance, Historical Justice and the Role of Roma Youth” was held on February 1 and 2, 2018.

The event in Kraków focused on the importance of history and memory, the practices of remembering, commemorating, and the processes of narrating and transmitting history. More specifically, the Kraków event aimed to provide a space in which different stakeholders and institutions could engage in a discussion, assessing the current state of historical and commemorative practices and discuss the future agenda with regards to Roma history. The event provided a forum in which the paths of the Roma movement, especially Roma youth activism, Roma artistic and knowledge production, as well as institutional practice and support, intersected in order to advance in the process of shaping and promoting Roma historical narratives.

It provided an opportunity for outstanding Roma and non-Roma scholars, activists, institutional representatives and artists from different countries to exchange ideas about Roma history and future approaches, as well as the newest findings.

“The Right to Look”, the privilege to listen

The event was inaugurated with a showcase of Roma art. On February 1, the opening of the exhibition of Romani artists “The Right to Look”, curated by Delaine Le Bas and Dr. Wojciech Szymański, was inaugurated at the Contemporary Arts Gallery Szara Kamienica, located on the Main Square in Kraków. The exhibition included the artwork of Delaine Le Bas, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, Andrzej Mirga (photographs) and Krzysztof Gil; and was inaugurated by the curators, by Dr. Anna Mirga-Kruszelnicka, Deputy Director of the ERIAC and by Dr. Michael Groß, General Consul of Germany.

The exhibition created under the curatorship of Szymański and Le Bas takes the photographs of Andrzej Mirga as a point of departure. Towards the end of the 1970s, as a Polish Romani and then a student of ethnography at the Jagiellonian University
in Kraków, Mirga took a number of black-and-white photographs which documented the life of the Romani communities from Czarna Góra and other villages and small towns from the southern part of Lesser Poland. This photographic reportage is a unique, priceless and highly interesting record from the visual archive of the past and served as a direct source of inspiration to two contemporary Romani artists.

During her artistic residency at Czarna Góra in 2016, the Romani-British artist Delaine Le Bas repeated, in a sense, the gesture of Andrzej Mirga; the same photographs become a major source of inspiration for Malgorzata Mirga-Tas, who, like the photographer/ethnographer, was also born in Czarna Góra. The exhibition is completed by drawings on paper of Krzysztof Gil, a Podhale-based Polish-Romani artist, who rewrites the canons of European portraiture.

From History of Roma to Roma History

On February 2, 2018 the international expert conference “The Future of Roma History: Remembrance, Historical Justice and the Role of Roma Youth” took place at the Galicia Jewish Museum, located in the heart of the Jewish District in Cracow. The conference was opened by a short speech by Mrs. Krystyna Gil, Roma genocide survivor, and a keynote speech by Dr. Ismael Cortés, post-doc CEU RSP Fellow & UNESCO Chair of Philosophy, “Roma Orality and Literacy: The Youth Struggle for Memory, Education and Culture”. Three thematic panels followed.

The first panel, “Commemorating Roma History – Practices and Achievements” covered the efforts and achievements aimed at promoting the recognition of the Roma Holocaust as an integral chapter of European history. It aimed to inquire into practices of commemoration, institutional support and, most importantly, the role of Roma activists and organizations in seeking historical justice. Speakers included Mr. Emran Elmazi, from the Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti; Dr. Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska, Auschwitz Museum and Jagiellonian University in Kraków; Dr. Piotr Trojański, IHRA “Killing Sites” Project and Pedagogical University in Kraków; Adam Bartosz, curator of the Regional Museum in Tarnow and initiator of “International Romani Caravan of Memory”; and Ionel Cordovan and Noemi Cordovan, Romani language teachers and collaborators with Romanian Ministry of Education.

The second panel, “Unravelling the Blind Spots in Roma History” aimed to cover the current state of knowledge with regards to history of Roma communities in Europe, examining existing scholarship and unravelling the blind spots in Roma history. It also gave participants an opportunity to discuss the future research agenda and the importance of knowledge production in shaping historical narratives on Roma. The session did not only focus on the history of the Roma Holocaust, but also explored local and national histories and reflect on the importance of knowledge in
seeking historical justice. Dr. Sławomir Kapralski, from the Pedagogical University of Kraków, inaugurated this session with a presentation “From History of Roma to Roma History? Between Academic Historiography and Political Mobilization”. Subsequently, Pierre Chopinaud, from French Roma organization Le Voix des Rroms, discussed “Action, Autonomy, Re-appropriation and Multiplicity: A “Romani Resistance" Methodology”. Andrzej Łuczak and Andrzej Sochaj from the Institute of Romani Heritage and Memory and Holocaust Victims talked about the work of their institution and their more recent historical findings. Andree Morgan Andrews, a Welsh Romani Gypsy activist, and Andrzej Mirga, Chair of Roma Education Fund (REF), provided further insight into the importance of Romani historical narratives.

The last panel, “The Future of Roma History and the Role of Roma Youth”, covered the future of practices of commemoration, teaching and increased visibility of Roma history as part of European and national histories. It focused explicitly on emphasizing the immensely important role of Roma youth activists and organizations in shaping these practices. The session discussed gaps, difficulties and ideas for the future as well as the role of Roma youth as multipliers, disseminators, activists, researchers and stakeholders, shaping Roma historical narratives. The panellists included: Daniel Grebeldinger, ternYpe, international Roma Youth Network “Dikh he I na bister” and Roma Genocide Remembrance Initiative (Romania); Jashar Jasharov, Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; Irina Spataru, Romano Centro (Austria); Justyna Matkowska, the Ethnic and National Minorities Plenipotentiary of the Dolnośląskie Voivode, PhD candidate at University of Wrocław and singer in “Siostry Matkowskie” (Poland); and Laco Oravec, Milan Simecka Foundation (Slovakia).

In parallel to the conference, workshops for high-school students about Roma were held by Roma youth activists Noemi and Delfin Łakatosz in the Galicia Jewish Museum. This was an important moment when the youngest generation of Roma artists and activists could meet and pass on their passion and knowledge to their non-Roma peers, through informal education.

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AUSCHWITZ WITNESSES IN THE “CHRONICLES OF TERROR”

On January 27, 2018, the Witold Pilecki Center for Totalitarian Studies made available in its Testimony database “Chronicles of Terror”, over 1,000 testimonies submitted by survivors of the German Naziconcentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. These testimonies - of Poles, Jews and persons of other nationalities - were collected shortly after the end of World War II for the needs of the two most important trials of members of the camp staff. The testimony database includes all testimonies given in the course of these trials in Polish.

After the war, most of the German perpetrators from Auschwitz-Birkenau were not held accountable for their crimes. Only about 10% of SS men who worked as members of the camp staff faced trial. Of all the trials that were held in the People’s Republic of Poland, two were of great significance because they revealed several key facts about the history of KL Auschwitz. In March 1947, Rudolf Höss, the founder and first commandant of the camp was brought before the Supreme National Tribunal in Warsaw. The trial was observed by representatives of prisoners’ associations and many journalists from around the world. Höss was sentenced to death and publicly hanged on the premises of KL Auschwitz. In November and December 1947, the so-called first Auschwitz trial of 40 former members of the camp crew was held in Cracow.
camp staff was held in Kraków. The Supreme National Tribunal adjudicated 23 death sentences (21 carried out), 16 sentences from life imprisonment to 3 years, and 1 defendant acquitted. In the course of both trials and the preceding investigations conducted by the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, the largest collection of early court testimonies submitted by survivors of Auschwitz-Birkenau was created.

Testimonies collected shortly after the war from Jews, Poles, Roma and people of several other nationalities from all over Europe are an invaluable source for learning the history of the camp from the perspective of the prisoners - victims of the German Third Reich.

The testimonies published in the “Chronicles of Terror” contain personal experiences of particular people who experienced the German totalitarian regime. By giving voice to the witnesses and their biographies, we counteract the intentions of the criminals who wanted to reduce the mass extermination to mere statistics. In the accounts, we can learn about the story of Jerzy Bielecki, for instance, who escaped from the camp in July 1944 along with his beloved Jewish woman, Cyla Cybulska. The famous sculptor Xawery Dunikowski talks about his confinement in the camp detention (the so-called bunker), while Jan Reyman, a chemist and football player for Wisła Kraków, speaks of experiments conducted at the SS Institute of Hygiene in Rajsk. Henryk Mandelbaum, a member of the Sonderkommando, describes the extermination of Jews in a harrowing way.

“The burning lasted for 12, 13 or 15 minutes. A transport of 3,000 people, as the commanding officer repeatedly said, had to be burned all at once.” The famous pre-war boxer Tadeusz Pietrzykowski, in turn, recalls one of the selections during which an unexpected incident occurred:

“Once, when Fritsch was performing the selection, the priest Kolbe stepped out and sacrificed his life for another.”

The witnesses speak of the first transport of Poles from the prison in Tarnów to the camp; selections at the Birkenau ramp; gassing of the Jews and Soviet prisoners of war; murderous work in the sub-camps; pseudo-medical experiments; executions at the “Death Wall”; resistance attempts against the Germans; and escapes from Auschwitz. We perceive all these events from the perspective of the prisoners who describe their experiences in the camp, in the hands of officers of the Third Reich. Although the accounts are descriptions of the victims' experiences, they also tell us a lot about the perpetrators.
Each testimony published in the “Chronicles of Terror” is thoroughly described by a system of passwords (so-called tags). Thanks to these tags we get to know not only the witness’ personal details, but also the date of the event, categories of victims, types of crimes, and names of individuals that perpetrated the crimes. The locations of the events described by the witnesses are displayed on a special map. Some of the accounts are accompanied by photos of testifying persons. All testimonies are published as a scan of the archival original and its transcription into Polish. Each testimony is translated into English. Currently, about 600 testimonies from Auschwitz are available in the “Chronicles of Terror” in English. The Center hopes that through such translations the testimonies will be available for international circulation, thereby propagating knowledge of the victims of totalitarianism in the world.

Other helpful tools, which we have prepared for users of our database, are the selection of the most interesting accounts, thematic collection of testimonies and popular science texts that allow users to familiarize themselves with the historical context of the events described in the testimonies.

Accessibility of testimonies in the “Chronicles of Terror” is accompanied by two campaigns conducted by the Center for Totalitarian Studies. The collection of testimonies is supplemented with private photographs, documents and other memorabilia concerning testifying persons or those mentioned in the accounts. We conduct the collection under the slogan “Share Memory”, appealing to all to transfer memorabilia from private archives, which after digitization will enrich our database of testimonies. Thanks to this, we hope to show the personal history and daily life of persons who got caught up in the totalitarian system. With the second campaign, we want to reach out to users of Facebook and other social networking sites. During the campaign #GlosOcalonych / #SurvivorsReveal we publish one exceptional account of an Auschwitz-Birkenau survivor on our social media profiles every day.

The testimony database “Chronicles of Terror” inaugurated its activities on August 5, 2016, on the 72nd anniversary of the Wola Massacre. It is a modern undertaking that combines scientific research, memory culture and the popularization of history implemented by the Witold Pilecki Center for Totalitarian Studies.

In the repository, we publish accounts of citizens of Poland and other nationalities who, during World War II, experienced suffering from two totalitarian regimes: German and Soviet.
Ultimately, the “Chronicles of Terror” are to become one of the largest collections of testimonies of the civilian population of occupied Europe. Thanks to an agreement with the Institute of National Remembrance, we publish testimonies collected by the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland, which until now had been dispersed and locked deep in the archives. We began the development of the repository by making available accounts related to Warsaw, especially testimonies from the period of the Warsaw Uprising led by the tragic Wola massacre. We are constantly developing the project to include the database of testimonies from all over Poland. In the future, we will supplement it with accounts collected by the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes as part of other investigations and trials against German criminals from Auschwitz-Birkenau, which will allow us to complement the collection of testimonies from the trials of Rudolf Höss and 40 members of the staff. Pursuant to an agreement with the American Hoover Institute of September 17, 2017, the accounts of communist crimes submitted by soldiers of the Anders Army and the civil population upon liberation from the Soviet Union have also been made available in the “Chronicles of Terror”.

In times when the history of World War II is relativized and twisted, and the German crimes, including the Holocaust, are sometimes questioned, the prisoners' accounts restore the proper proportions to the phenomena and allow us to precisely distinguish the victims from the perpetrators.

We hope that through the “Chronicles of Terror” these testimonies will reach out to the scientific circles in Poland and abroad, draw the interest of journalists and creators of culture, reach the prisoners' families and, as such, contribute to a better understanding of and reflection upon the Auschwitz experience.
FLASHES OF MEMORY - PHOTOGRAPHY DURING THE HOLOCAUST

Visual documentation is one of the major factors in shaping historical awareness of the Holocaust. Alongside archival documentation of the period’s events and the research on these records, visual documentation has contributed significantly towards knowledge of the Holocaust, influenced the manner in which it has been analyzed and understood, and affected the way it has been engraved in collective memory.

Displayed throughout this exhibition are some 1,500 photographs and 13 films created during the Holocaust, as well as original newspaper clippings, albums, diaries, and a number of original cameras from the period. Also included in the collection are three-dimensional and color photographs taken by professional photographers of the Nazi regime.
The camera, with its manipulative power, has tremendous impact and far-reaching influence. Although photography purports to reflect reality as it is, it is essentially an interpretation of it, since elements such as worldview, values, and moral perception influence the choice of the object to be photographed as well as how it is presented. When visual documentation is also used as a historical document, its use requires attributing the greatest of importance to these components.

Different agencies photographed during the Holocaust. For the Nazi German regime, photography and filmmaking played a crucial role in propaganda as a means of expression and a tool for manipulating and mobilizing the masses. This kind of documentation attests to Nazi ideology and how German leaders sought to mold their image in the public eye. Conversely, Jewish photography was a component in the struggle for survival of the Jews imprisoned in the ghettos, and a manifestation of underground activity that testified to their desire to document and transmit information on the tragedy befalling their people. The Allied armies, who understood the informational value of photographing the camps they liberated, documented the scenes revealed to them, bringing in official photographers and encouraging soldiers to commemorate the Nazi horrors as evidence for future war crimes trials and in an effort to re-educate the German population.

This exhibit presents a critical examination of documentation through the camera lens, focusing on the circumstances of the photograph and the worldview of the photographer, while referring to the Jewish photographers’ different and unique viewpoints as direct victims of the Holocaust. All items on display are replicas of the originals.

Yad Vashem
Jerusalem
Exhibition Pavillion

www.yadvashem.org
STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL AUSCHWITZ COUNCIL

The International Auschwitz Council by the Prime Minister of Poland observes with the utmost concern the dispute over the amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance accepted by the Polish Parliament. For years, the International Auschwitz Council has supported efforts and has been engaged in activities that fought the false statement about "Polish camps". However, the new imprecise regulations raise legitimate concerns about restricting the freedom of research on the truth about the Holocaust. We strongly object to that.

At that same time we do not lose hope for dialogue between the involved parties. Since the year 2000 the International Auschwitz Council by the Prime Minister of Poland has been a place of such dialogue and building understanding that is respectful to the truth, that protects the memory of all the victims, and that is made with mutual respect. In the face of the conflict nowadays we are determined to continue this role.

HALINA BIRENBAUM, Holocaust Survivor
SARA J. BLOOMFIELD, Executive Director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington
PIOTR M.A. CYWIŃSKI, Ph.D., Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim, President of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation
FATHER MANFRED DESELAERS, Ph.D., Vice Chairman of the Board of the Cracow Foundation Centre for Dialogue and Prayer in Oświęcim
HAVI DREYFUS, Ph.D.
PROF. BARBARA ENGELKING, Chairwoman of the IAC
RABBI IRVIN GREENBERG
DAVID HARRIS, Executive Director of the American Jewish Committee
CHRISTOPH HEUBNER, Vice President of the International Auschwitz Committee
ROMAN KENT, Holocaust Survivor, President of the International Auschwitz Committee
SERGE KLAIRSFELD, Board Member of the Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah
OLIVIER LALIEU, historian
RONALD LAUDER, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress
PROF. PAWEŁ MACHCEWICZ
AGNIESZKA MAGDZIĄK-MISZEWSKA
RICHARD PRASQUIER, Ph.D., Honorary Chairman of the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France (CRIF)
ROMANI ROSE, Chairman of the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma
ARCHBISHOP GRZEGORZ RYŚ, Metropolitan Archbishop of Łódź
AVNER SHALEV, Chairman of the Yad Vashem Directorate and Deputy Chairman of the IAC
PROF. DARIUSZ STOLA, Director of the Museum of the History of the Polish Jews POLIN
MARIAN TURSKI, Holocaust Survivor, Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland and Vice-President of the International Auschwitz Committee
HENRYK WUJEC, Deputy Chairman of the IAC
MAREK ZAJĄC, Secretary of the IAC and Chairman of the Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation