JEWs IN UPPER SilesIA.
EXHIBITION AT THE
UPPER SILESIAN JEWS HOUSE OF REMEMBRANCE

THE words of hateRD
STUpeFY
CONSCIOUSNESS.
74TH ANNIVERSAY OF
THE LIBERATION OF
AUSCHWITZ

CRIMES UNCOVERED.
NEW EXHIBITION
AT THE WIENER LIBRARY
IN LONDON

INNOVATIVE METHODS
tO FORECAST AND
PRECENT GENOCIDE AT
HOLOCAUST MUSEUM IN
WASHINGTON D.C.

THE FIRST
DOCUMENTATION OF THE
HOLOCAUST IN POLAND
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AT THE JEWISH
HISTORICAL INSTITUTE
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We invite all of you to work closely with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we should share with our readers. We also accept proposals for articles.

Please do share information about this magazine with others, particularly via social media.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-chief

Our e-mail: memoria@auschwitz.org

All editions: memoria.auschwitz.org
The so-called, Eiss Archive is one of the largest collections documenting the rescue activities of Polish diplomacy for Jews at risk of the Holocaust, is already in Poland. On 12 February, the documents were officially presented at the Belvedere in Warsaw, in the presence of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda.

The Archive documents rescue operations conducted from Bern during World War II by the then Polish ambassador Aleksander Ładość and his diplomats, as well as the cooperating Jewish organisations. During these operations, several thousand illegally obtained Latin American passports were issued, thereby saving the lives of several hundreds of people.

The documents were recovered, thanks to the joint efforts of the Polish Embassy in Bern, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

'Mr President, I report that the Chaim Eiss Archive is now in Poland,' said the director of the Auschwitz Museum, Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński. It is a unique day and a very touching moment for me. It is the first presentation of the archive of Rabbi Eiss in Poland. I want to thank you very much for marking us as its roof. I think it is the most dignified way of welcoming back such a significant archival collection to Poland,' he emphasised.

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When soldiers came to take her away to Treblinka camp and be gassed, Lena Goldstein managed to hide under a pile of German uniforms in a laundry. The day remains seared in her mind, and as she tells her story today, having just celebrated her 100th birthday in Sydney, it is with a freshness and an urgency to ensure the atrocities are not forgotten.

Poland’s Jewish community is being reborn. It’s a trend being led not just by people who have recently discovered their Jewish ancestry, but also those without Jewish roots who wish to give back. Now Poland, where 1,000 years of Jewish history went up in flames over seven decades ago during the German occupation, is home to one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities in the world.

More than 150 UK MPs have signed a letter in support of the proposal to build a Holocaust memorial outside Parliament, saying it will “stand as a testimony” to fighting hatred.

You can talk to people who have visited Auschwitz before, but nothing really prepares you for how you feel, think and react to walking through the former German concentration camp. Since 1999, the Holocaust Educational Trust has run the Lessons from Auschwitz project, giving thousands of students the opportunity to visit the Auschwitz Memorial and Museum.
On January 27, more than 50 former prisoners of Auschwitz and Holocaust survivors met at the former Auschwitz camp to commemorate the 74th anniversary of the liberation of this German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The event was held under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda.

The witnesses to history were accompanied among others, by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki, Deputy Prime Minister Beata Szydło, representatives of the Polish Government, the Prime Minister of North Rhine-Westphalia Armin Laschet, ambassadors and diplomats, representatives of the clergy, regional authorities, local governments, employees of museums and memorial sites.

In 2019, we will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the creation of the railway siding inside the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp along with the unloading and selection ramp, which extended almost to the gas chambers and crematoria II and III. From mid-May 1944, it received transports of Jews from Hungary, Slovakia, the ghettos of Litzmannstadt and Theresienstadt among others, deported by the Germans for immediate extermination. It was also a stop for transports carrying Poles from insurgent Warsaw, sent to Auschwitz via the transit camp in Pruszków. Consequently, the visual symbol of the anniversary was the work of former Auschwitz prisoner Adam Brandhuber “The arrival of the transport to the ramp”.

During the commemoration event, two former prisoners of the camp took to the floor: Janina Iwańska and Leon Weintraub.

Janina Iwańska was born on 12 June 1930, in Warsaw. She was deported to Auschwitz by the Germans from the Warsaw Uprising. During the evacuation of the camp, she was first transferred to the Ravensbrück camp, and then to Neustadt-Glewe.

'Anyone who enters the site of the camp in Birkenau passes by a wagon standing on the ramp. For the majority, it is merely a freight wagon that carried prisoners to the concentration camp. For me, this wagon is associated with something else. I saw this wagon for the first time in 1942 while travelling through Treblinka on vacation to my grandmother. People were sitting there, either already dead or waiting for death,' she said.

Recalling her deportation to Auschwitz in 1944, she said: 'When I got out of the wagon; I sensed a familiar smell from Treblinka, the smell of burnt bodies. I knew the same fate as those in Treblinka awaited me. With this mindset, I entered the building, where our hair was cut to the bare skin. After a bath, we were given striped uniforms and marked with a number and red triangle badge with the letter P, which indicated that we were political prisoners from Poland. I received the number 85595. Through a column of children, we were led to the children's block,' she recalled.
At the end of her account, the former prisoner recited the poem “Oh, Void Complaints” by Adam Asnyk:

“It is the living we must follow,
And leave the former life beneath.
Abandon the persistence hollow,
Shake off the withered laurel wreath!

Unstopped the waves of life proceeding!
No aid in protests you may raise.
Oh, useless wrath and futile pleading!

The world shall follow its own ways. It is my wish that the young and future generations will not have to follow the path I had to go through.”

Leon Weintraub was born on 1 January 1926 in Łódź. During the war, he and his family were confined in the Litzmannstadt ghetto, and from there they were deported in August 1944 to Auschwitz, where Leon was separated from the rest of the family. After several weeks, he was transferred to Głuszyce, and then to the Dörnhau camp and subsequent labour camps. 'In Auschwitz, in this Nazi camp; a place symbolising the unprecedented cruelty in the treatment of people in the history of civilisation; a place, where the technique of mass and industrial murder was introduced, and where the Nazis implemented their ideology,' he said.

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"I feel great pain and bemoan that in many European countries including our country, people march with impunity in uniforms similar to those of the Nazi. Such persons openly call themselves Nazis and identify with Nazism, propagating slogans similar to those of the Nazis. This ideology characterised by the sign of a broken cross murdered those it considered 'sub-humans'. Acknowledging Nazism today is undoubtedly defining oneself as a murderer and perpetrator of genocide because that is the inevitable outcome of such a mindset, which at first proclaims resentment and hostility toward others and defines racism, antisemitism and homophobia as virtues, as did the followers of Nazism. And to think that this is happening in our country, which encountered so much destruction and suffering during the Nazi occupation,' he said.

"On behalf of myself and the survivors, I represent here today; I wish to thank and express my sincere gratitude to the management of the Auschwitz Museum for their daily and indefatigable activities aimed at preserving the memory of the victims of the Nazi ideology and combating prejudices and hostility towards others,' emphasised Leon Weintraub.

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland Mateusz Morawiecki said during his address: 'The years 1989, 1939 and 2019 are years of round anniversaries. Polish citizens gained independence 30 years ago. However, 80 years earlier, on the orders of Nazi Germany, Poles living in the II Polish Republic did not only lose their freedom but Polish Jews were sentenced to extermination, as well as Poles as their extermination was precisely calculated in the Generalplan Ost - to murder about 85 per cent. The remaining 15 per cent was to be turned into a slave workforce. This annihilation, which took place then was not the work of the Nazis, but Germany ruled by Hitler.'
'The Polish state upholds the truth, which cannot be relativised in any way. I want to make such a promise of the full truth of those times because we must face the facts. So that the terrible and cruel death of those imprisoned here and in other German concentration camps... does not happen again, ' said Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki.

Minister Wojciech Kolarski from the Office of the President of Poland said: 'We are gathered in the circle of eternal memory. We are here once again to give testimony that we will always speak about what transpired here. The President asked me to address the Survivors on his behalf and those of our countrymen. We promise you that we will never cease to propagate the truth about Auschwitz and the crime of the Holocaust. As it has been proclaimed since the day of the liberation of the camp and will continue for generations. We will pass it to our children and grandchildren, and they will further pass it to subsequent generations. In the name of a good future, we also wish to draw conclusions from the tragic history. Protect the world from the consequences of contempt and hate, from underestimating and justifying evil. It is the duty of our hearts and consciences, which must never be neglected.

'Hanna Krall told me that the Holocaust brought out the real face of everyone - sometimes the best, sometimes the worst. These wagons were also such litmus paper. We are familiar with the story of poor people who threw everything they could into the wagons, but also of those who in the presence of the prisoners, poured out the water they paid for onto the ground. I believe that we owe memory to anyone who arrived here or died on the journey, but we should also describe the best and worst experiences of the witnesses of those events,' said the ambassador of Israel, Anna Azari.

'Auschwitz is the place where millions of people receive the vaccination against historical amnesia, which is so desired in our world today. May the madness of war and extermination camps never occur again. May a peaceful sky cover forever cover us all,' said the ambassador of the Russian Federation, Siergiej Andriejew.

'In the beginning was the Word. And then, when it was with the people, it turned out that the word could also destroy,' said the director of the Auschwitz Museum, Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński. 'And today words have the power. And it is so destructive. On the Internet, in discussion, on forums, in comments. In the media, titles, captions. In the groups of notions, where the people who are poor, cringing, running away... are presented as people with germs and diseases... In the juxtaposition of concepts, where it depicts people who are poor, intimidated, fleeing... with germs and diseases,' he emphasised.

- The words of hatred create hatred. The words of dehumanization dehumanize. The words of menace increase the threat. So why isn't this taught at schools? So why does our law allow it? Why do homilies pass it over? Why do the media use the language of war to describe peace? We have already started paying for this. In Poland, in Europe, in the world, said Piotr Cywiński.

The second part of the ceremony took place at the Memorial to the Victims on the premises of the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The rabbis and clergy of various Christian denominations jointly recited 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, on 27 January, former prisoners along with the management and employees of the Auschwitz Memorial laid wreaths in the courtyard of Block 11 in Auschwitz I.

Until the liberation of the camp by soldiers of the Red Army, German Nazis murdered approx. 1.1 million people in Auschwitz, mostly Jews, but also Poles, the Roma, Soviet prisoners of war and people of other nationalities. Auschwitz is to the world today, a symbol of the Holocaust and atrocities of World War II. In 2005, the United Nations adopted 27 January as the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.
The address of Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński - the director of the Auschwitz Museum - at the 74th anniversary of the liberation of the camp.

In the beginning was the Word. And then, when it was with the people, it turned out that the word could also destroy.

Simone Alizon recalled: “Our words are not your words”.

Ramp does not equal platform. Number does not equal name. Segregation or selection does not equal choice. Barracks does not equal building.

And today words have the power. And it is so destructive.

On the Internet, in discussion, on forums, in comments. In the media, titles, captions. In the groups of notions, where the people who are poor, cringing, running away... are presented as people with germs and diseases. In the language of political debate, in demagogy, in populism.

In brutal opinions of those who, supposed to serve, want to lead.

The words of hatred poison the imagination and stupefy consciousness. Maybe this is why so many remain silent while confronted with evil.

Almost the entire world remained silent last year, confronted with the genocide in Burma.

The words of hatred create hatred. The words of dehumanization dehumanize. The words of menace increase the threat.

So why isn’t this taught at schools? So why does our law allow it? Why do homilies pass it over? Why do the media use the language of war to describe peace?

We have already started paying for this. In Poland, in Europe, in the world.

A year, one year remained until the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Until international commemoration, which should constitute the ceremony of victory! But we are scared how much destruction can still be done with words.

Raphaël Esrail wrote: “The camp is not just a memory. For the majority of us, its reality is omnipresent in our everyday life.”

I have never heard a more terrible warning. The warning against our own words.
A permanent exhibition titled “Jews in Upper Silesia” has been available since 2018, at the Upper Silesian Jews House of Remembrance, a branch of the Museum in Gliwice. It is the first such cross-sectional and comprehensive exposition, showing the contribution of the Jewish community in the development of the region and its complicated history. It illustrates the social and religious life of the Jews, as well as their involvement in economic activities, especially in the XIX century, when their significance was most relevant. Their history is presented from the beginnings of the settlement at the end of the Middle Ages, through the most significant numerical development in the XIX century, to the XX century, the Holocaust.

Upper Silesia is a land with a rich history and tangled political histories: in the Middle Ages, these lands belonged to the Polish state of the Piast Dynasty, then to the Czech Crown and the Austrian state of the Habsburgs. In the middle of the XVIII century, most of Upper Silesia became part of the Kingdom of Prussia, becoming one of the most important industrial centres of Central Europe in the XIX century. At the beginning of the exhibition a multimedia presentation of changes in the nationality and borders of the region over the centuries was presented, to familiarise visitors with these complex issues and the territorial range of Upper Silesia. The exhibition itself refers to Upper Silesia within the boundaries of the XIX century Opole district, i.e. excluding Cieszyn Silesia and Opava Silesia (regions that remained in the Austrian state in the XVIII century, with different historical conditions).

The ancestors of Upper Silesian Jews came to these lands in the Middle Ages mainly from Germany and the Czech Republic. At the outset of the exhibition, the earliest traces of their stay and the oldest surviving documents are presented, and further on, waves of their settlement and the associated restrictions, privileges, prohibitions, etc. - until the XIX century, when full equality of rights for Jews was achieved in the Prussian state. This part of the exposition highlights the importance of the town of Biała near Prudnik (in German; Zülz), which was the most important centre of Jewish life in Upper Silesia between the XVI and XVII centuries.

The emancipation edict of 1812 and subsequent Prussian legislation made it possible to revive Jewish settlements. It led to the emergence of new religious communes and the development of religious life: construction of synagogues, establishment of cemeteries, running active religious institutions. At the same time, these changes facilitated the assimilation of Jews to the dominant German culture in Upper Silesia.

In this part of the exposition, one of the most important elements is the presentation of more than forty Upper Silesia synagogues, most of which no longer exist. They are presented in a unique, visually beautiful form so-called crystal; i.e., a portable browser with illuminated walls on which visitors can learn about the history of their creation, location in city spaces and iconography, sometimes unique, showing their diversity.
Plebiscyt 1921 r.
The Plebiscite of 1921
The collected material is the first of such a comprehensive presentation of the never-before-examined subject of Upper Silesian synagogues. The history of the synagogues is linked to the documents presented in the multimedia browser regarding their construction, opening, rules of conduct in the synagogue, etc., as well as the few preserved original exhibits, such as candlesticks, parochets, Torah ornaments, prayer clock, books, etc. Additionally, it presents the figure of the prominent Upper Silesia rabbis.

The XIX century was also a period of heightened activities by Jewish communities and religious institutions, such as schools, mikvahs, ritual slaughterhouses, as well as the establishment of Jewish cemeteries (a multimedia browser shows the history of more than fifty Upper Silesian cemeteries and their former iconography). The exposition also presents the unique role played by the Association of Synagogue Communities of the Opole Region, established in 1888, with seat in Gliwice, which contributed to the construction of a Jewish orphans' house in Rybnik and a children's clinic in Jastrzębie. Moreover, the Jewish community was intensively involved in the activities of various scientific, cultural, sports and charity associations. Numerous organisations existed, such as married women's associations, unmarried women's associations, care for the sick, care for orphans, help for midwives, help for lonely people, craft associations, as well as the Masonic Lodge B'nai B'rith (Sons of the Covenant). A unique event was the world's first conference of the Zion Lovers Movement – Hovevei Zion, which took place in Katowice in 1884. In 1912, the international organisation Agudat Israel (Union of Israel) was established. Family life and religious rites are depicted through the memories of the XIX and XX centuries (audio stands to listen to) and related original exhibits, such as a tefilin, a Hanukkah lamp, etrog utensils, kiddush cups, mementoes from Israel, wedding photos and documents, etc.

The next part of the exhibition shows the involvement of Jews in the Upper Silesia industry and culture in the XIX and early XX centuries. It also presents the history of Jewish entrepreneurs and families, such as Friedländer, Caro, Hulschinsky, Haase, Fränkel, Pinkus, Troplowitz and others. Representatives of the intellectual elite were also presented, among them were prominent scientists, including Nobel Prize winners, inventors, teachers, lawyers, doctors and people of culture, such as Konrad Bloch, Otto Stern, Emin Pascha, Arthur Silbergleit, Max Tau, Franz Waxman.

The assimilation, which began in the XIX century, led to the lifestyle of Upper Silesian Jews being similar to the rest of the region's inhabitants. This process is reflected in numerous family photographs from the second half of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, presented at the exhibition, which confirms the thesis that Upper Silesian Jews “were Jews only at home, but Europeans on the street”. They considered themselves not as Jews born in Germany, but as Germans of the Mosaic faith. Not only did they feel as fully-fledged citizens that differed only by religion from others, but, unlike most Jews in Eastern Europe, they were largely secularised. This rootedness in German culture was reflected, among others, during World War I and the Upper Silesian uprisings and an opinion poll in 1921, when local Jews were in favour of belonging to the German state. The exhibition presents documents and iconography related to these issues.

As a result of the division of Upper Silesia in 1922, the history of Jews, both on the German side and Polish side of the border developed differently. This part of the exposition shows the ensuing migrations, as well as the differences and mutual interactions between German and Polish Jews. It also presents the rise of anti-Semitism and Nazism, as well as the extraordinary role and significance of the so-called Bernheim petition, which led to the granting of an exceptional status to Upper Silesian Jews in Nazi Germany until July 1937.

The next part of the exhibition was devoted to the tragic times of Nazism and the Holocaust, starting with “Polish Action” (expulsion of Polish Jews) and the so-called Crystal Night in 1938, through emigration, stigmatisation of Jews, numerous orders and prohibitions up to
Racibórz | Ratibor

Pierwszy drewniany dom modlitewny został w 1786 r. w dzielnicy Bożen w pobliskimertoire, a druga murowana synagoga wzniesiona w latach 1828–1829 przy Schulblageng (obecnie ul. Szeroka) i oddana do użytku w 1829 r. Gdy prawo wcinanie na powierzchnię gminy, a miejsce budowania w latach 1868–1869 nową synagogę w stylu modernistycznym. Wzniesiono ją miejscowy budowniczy Georg Ludwig. Zadaniem fundacji Bankowej do tego celu w celu wykonania i użycia w celach.

The first wooden prayer house was built in 1786 in the Bożen district, near the castle, and the second wooden synagogue was built in 1828–1829 on Schulblageng (Szeroka Street) and opened for use in 1829. When it became insufficient for the community’s needs, a new synagogue was built in its place in 1868–1869, in a Modernist style. It was constructed by the local builder master Georg Ludwig. The western facade was flanked by two towers with onion domes topped with lions of David. The elevations were made of red and yellow brick.

Wagrowiec synagoga, 1804 r.

Plan synagogi, 1863 r.

Plan synagogi w Jaworze.

Mapa synagogi w Jaworze.
**Katowice | Kattowitz**


Nową synagogę wybudowano w latach 1898–1900 przy Uferstraße i 9 ul. Mickiewicza, wzniesiono ją wg projektu Maxa Grünfelda w stylu neoromańskim z elementami późnego gotyku i stylu neorenesansowego. Wnętrze dość prostym było poprzez wielkie okna, a całość zwieńczono wielką kopułą z gwiazdą Dawida na szczycie. Synagoga została poświęcona 12 września 1900 roku. Oboje te budynki stały się symbolem żydowskiej kultury.

**Opole | Oppeln**

Stara synagoga, zbudowana przy Hospodarstwie (obecnie ul. Szpitalna 1), stanowiła ciekawy i dobry przykład synagogi w stylu elewacji klasycystyczny i zwieńczony dwuspadowym dachem. Synagoga została poświęcona 22 kwietnia 1897 roku. (prawdopodobnie do dziś w ruinach położonej na terenie Tynie jest synagoga).

The first synagogue was built in the years 1861–1862, at the intersection of the former GruENklaer Straße (today 43 Main Street) and Schliffertstrasse (today Słowackiego Street), according to a design by building master Ignaz Grünfeld from a local Jewish family. Constructed on September 9, 1862, it was a modest building in a style that alluded to the neo-Romanesque, with a rectangular floor plan, covered with a gable roof. After being extended in 1882 (a substantial addition with two low towers, topped with a dome with the Star of David, was added on the western side), it was reconsecrated on April 20, 1883.

A new synagogue was built in 1898–1900 on Uferstraße (modern August Schröderstrasse, today 9 Mickiewicz Street), where it converged with what today are Słowackiego and Skarg str. It was constructed according to designs by Max Grünfeld in the German neo-Renaissance style with elements of late Gothic and the Moorish style. The interiors were illuminated by large glass windows, and the whole was crowned by a great dome with a Star of David at the apex. The synagogue was consecrated on September 12, 1900. It stood alongside the Jewish community building.

The old synagogue, located on the corner of the former Hospital Street (today 1 Hospital Street), replaced the market place from the old Poniatowski's market. It was intended to be the central building in the Old Town. It was reconstructed in the neo-Renaissance style and substantially extended, and it remained the central Jewish synagogue.

The new synagogue was built in 1898–1900 on Hospodarstwo (today Piotrowska Street), near the Past Castle. It was built in the Moorish style, according to designs by the architect Julius Hensel. It was reconstructed in the neo-Renaissance style and substantially extended, and it remained the central Jewish synagogue.

Plan Katowice | Plan Opole

Mapa Katowic z wybranymi miejscami

Mapa Opola z wybranymi miejscami
ghettoisation, forced labour camps, deportations to extermination camps and "death marches" in January 1945. Essential elements of this part of the exhibition are memoirs depicting individual fates, as well as lists of emigrants and deportees, including an expressive, spatial installation presenting synagogues destroyed during this period.

Another part of the exhibitions begins with example stories of a few survivors of the war. In the last hall, the exhibition presents post-war history from 1945, starting with the influx of the Upper Silesia Jewish community from the East, through the anti-Jewish activities of the late 1940s of the XX century and subsequent years, as well as successive waves of emigration, particularly in 1968. It also presents the political, economic and social commitment typical of the post-war reality of the Polish Peoples Republic and the transformations after 1989. The history of Jews in Upper Silesia has been stretched to the present day: current activity is presented in the form of video recordings with representatives of this currently, small community, which was prepared in the autumn of 2018.

The exhibition entitled “Jews in Upper Silesia” presents this issue for the first time in such a comprehensive manner. It is a huge and multi-threaded topic, previously researched to a lesser degree. In preparation for the project, in-depth and preliminary archival research of libraries and museums in Upper Silesian centres, as well as other Polish cities and abroad, including Berlin, Jerusalem and New York, were carried out in cooperation with many people.

As a result of these activities, over 60 original exhibits as well as numerous documents and illustrations related to the history of Upper Silesian Jews are presented at the exhibition, some of them unique and presented to the public for the first time. They come from more than 100 institutional and private partners, Polish and foreign, among others, from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Israel, the USA, Argentina.

The presentation of so many exhibits, information and illustrative materials in a relatively small space was possible thanks to the unusual, carefully thought-out arrangement prepared by the Collective SENNA.
Participation in social life
Various browser types were used: manual, such as illuminated, rotating “crystal” with synagogues, covered with documents for independent browsing, hangers with information boards, post-war photo albums and others; - and multimedia, where one can browse and search for additional information on computer screens, e.g. Jewish cemeteries, the most eminent scientists, Jews deported from Gliwice and others. Another way of conveying information is through a number of audio stations, where you can listen to memories about the issues discussed, such as the celebration of Jewish holidays in the XIX century, the times of Nazism and war, or the emigration in 1968. A separate audio experience is provided by synagogue music played in the synagogue section and the sounds of the Katowice Street, where Polish, German and Hebrew are interwoven.

A significant portion of the information was provided on maps, specially prepared in terms of content and graphics for the needs of the exhibition. They present numerous statistical data from various periods from the XIX to the XX century, migrations of both the late XIX century and Nazism, matters of ghettoisation, deportation and the Holocaust, as well as migrations after 1945.

These numerous narrative threads, exhibits and documentation materials, including unique illustrations, as well as audio recordings provide an opportunity for self-study and discovery of unusual stories and curiosities. It also offers the opportunity to address a variety of topics within the framework of guided tours, museum lessons or workshops.

The exhibition is presented in the Upper Silesian Jews House of Remembrance (DPŻG), the newest branch of the Museum in Gliwice, one of five branches, in addition to Caro Villa, Piast Castle, Department of Artistic Foundry and Gliwice Radio Station. The seat of the DPŻG is a former Jewish pre-burial house, located at the cemetery at 14 Poniatowskiego Street. This beautiful and architecturally interesting, neo-Gothic building – one of the largest objects of its kind in Poland – was erected in the years 1902 - 1903 according to the project by Max Fleischer (1841 – 1905), an Austrian architect, and creator of synagogues in Vienna. It consists of three main parts: the representative prayer room - preserved to this day; the former morgue room - now houses educational rooms; and the rooms of the guard's apartment - now intended for exhibition rooms.

The more than 100-year-old building was renovated in the years 2013-2015 by the City of Gliwice, and in 2016 it was handed over for use by the Museum in Gliwice. The monument rescue activities have been recognised and distinguished in several prestigious competitions: the competition of the Ministry of Culture and the General Conservator of Monuments “Zabytek Zadbany” (Well-maintained Monument), the competition for the Best Public Space in the Silesian province 2016, the Museum Event of the Year Sybilla 2017.

The mission of the Upper Silesian Jews House of Remembrance is to study and commemorate the history of Jews in Upper Silesia and to create a space for meetings devoted to tolerance and coexistence of religions, cultures and nations. Since 2016, many promotion and educational activities have been carried out, such as lectures, workshops, film presentations, etc., as well as temporary exhibitions, and since December 2018, the permanent exhibition described above. Furthermore, a database of information about the Jews of Upper Silesia, the so-called knowledge Treasurer, has been created and research is underway on these issues. Currently, two main series of lectures are being held: “The Trail of Jewish Worlds in Upper Silesia" and "The House of Life and the House of Congregation: about the traditions of Upper Silesian Jews".

It is an open place for various initiatives and activities, with plenty of possibilities for organising scientific conferences, educational meetings, workshops, presentations and guided tours of the exhibition. An essential complement to the exhibition are the other rooms: the ceremonial hall and the educational room, as well as the cemetery, which are open to visitors during the opening hours of the museum.
An additional advantage of the institution, crucial for foreign visitors from, is the fact that the exhibition is entirely bilingual, Polish-English, and the employees of DPŻG speak English, German and Hebrew.

Basic information about the exhibition:

- co-financed by: Municipality of Gliwice
- Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland
- Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Wrocław and others
- curator: Bożena Kubit
- coordination and production supervision: Grzegorz Krawczyk
- co-curators: Przemysław Nadolski, Aleksandra Namysło, Natalia Romik
- exhibition project: The SENNA Collective (Sebastian Kucharuk, Natalia Romik, Piotr Jakowęńko, Agata Korba)
- xrealisation: IKG / Aleksander Sieklicki
- scientific consultations: Eleonora Bergman, Maciej Borkowski, Sebastian Rosenbaum, Dariusz Waleriański, Marcin Wodziński
- editing and proofreading: Anna Szczepańska-Krasoń, Janusz Krasoń
- English version: Soren Gauger, Joanna Osiewicz-Lorenzutti, Zofia Sochańska
- partners of the exhibition: State Archive in Opole, National Digital Archives

Authors of the photographs: pages. 17, 18-19, 26-27, 29 - Zdzisław Daniec
pages. 20, 24, 29 - Bożena Kubit
pages. 22-23 - Marcin Gołaszewski
INNOVATIVE METHODS TO FORECAST AND PREVENT GENOCIDE

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Uses Innovative Methods to Forecast and Prevent Genocide
Survivors of the Holocaust emerged from that tragedy committed to ensuring the permanence of Holocaust memory and education. This movement seeks to create a world in which neither Jews nor any other peoples are again targeted for genocide. The voices of the survivor community called for “Never Again.” This led to establishing sites of memorialization and education; founding of global institutions and a code of law that would protect people seeking refuge from state-sponsored persecution; and inspiring people worldwide to work to end this scourge.

A core part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s mission, as a living memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, is to do for victims of genocide today what was not done for the Jews of Europe in the 1930s and ‘40s. The Museum’s primary role is education. To help realize the survivors’ dream of a world without genocide, the Museum is also pioneering innovative methods to predict and prevent genocide. How can advances in technology and data analysis help us save lives? The case of Burma (also known as Myanmar) can be instructive.

We know from the Holocaust that once mass killing is underway, the window for prevention is closed and policy response options narrow. The Museum’s Early Warning Project, created in partnership with Dartmouth College, is the culmination of a years-long effort to ensure the international community hears—and heeds—warning signs and takes preventive measures.

On August 25, 2017, Burmese armed forces began attacking a Muslim minority population, known as the Rohingya people, in the country’s western region. The Rohingya had been persecuted for years, but the new attacks were more severe and widespread than ever before. This onset of violence, including mass killing, rape, torture, arson, and arbitrary arrest and detention, resulted in the displacement of more than 700,000 people. The Museum recently determined that there is compelling evidence the Burmese military committed ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and genocide against the Rohingya.

Like all instances of genocide, the crimes committed against the Rohingya were shocking. In this case, however, the risks had been identified well in advance. Long before the current violence, the government of Burma imposed strict restrictions on Rohingya freedom of movement, marriage, childbirth, and other aspects of daily life. The Rohingya were denied equal access to Myanmar citizenship by law since 1982, and the government as well as many others cast the Rohingya as an existential threat to Buddhist culture.

In 2014 and 2015, Burma topped the Museum’s Early Warning Project risk list, which ranks countries at risk for an onset of mass killing each year.

Following these assessments, the Museum travelled to the region on a research mission and published a report detailing early warning signs of genocide against the Rohingya, sounding the alarm about the risk of atrocities.

The Early Warning Project is just one tool to help support policy makers. Its accurate forecasting of this atrocity and the work of the Museum and others to alert the world of devastating crimes of such scale and scope were not enough to prevent violence from occurring. But without this kind of forward-looking analysis of atrocity risks and the ability to galvanize demand for early action to address the warning signs, the world has little chance of preventing the next genocide.

The Nazis were in power for eight years before they began the systematic mass murder of the Jews in 1941. Genocides are never spontaneous; they are always preceded by a range of early warning signs. If these signs are detected, their causes can be addressed, preventing the potential for catastrophic progression.
The project has three complementary components: an annual quantitative assessment, ongoing wisdom-of-the-crowds polling, and in-depth qualitative research projects conducted in partnership with country experts.

The annual Statistical Risk Assessment builds on decades of scholarship on early warning signs, the latest forecasting methodology and publicly available data sources to rank 162 countries based on their risk for experiencing a new mass killing—defined as deliberate actions by armed groups leading to at least 1,000 noncombatant deaths, of a specific group of people, over 12 months or less—in the next two years. Virtually all cases of genocide include mass killings that meet this definition. The assessment measures the risk of mass killing perpetrated by both state and non-state actors, such as ISIS.

This tool can help policymakers and nongovernmental organizations to support prevention efforts in the world’s highest-risk countries; for example, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, and Egypt. It can also serve to spotlight countries at risk that may not be receiving the attention their risk level warrants. For example, Mali ranked in the top 10% of countries in the statistical assessments from 2014 to 2016. Its high ranking came as a surprise to many observers, who considered Mali to be high-risk for violent extremism but not for violence against civilians or genocide. This discrepancy led the Early Warning Project to conduct

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additional in-depth analysis of the country, ultimately uncovering significant risks and pointing policymakers to focus attention and resources on preventing a potential crisis.

The Statistical Risk Assessment, however, is meant to be a starting point for discussion and further research, not a definitive conclusion.

To complement it, the Early Warning Project is experimenting with different crowd-forecasting techniques, drawing on the body of research showing that deep expertise does not necessarily improve forecasting accuracy. The project conducts an ongoing “opinion pool,” asking forecasters, “Will an armed group from a country engage in a campaign that systematically kills 1,000 or more civilians in that same country?” Forecasters are encouraged to update their assessments as news comes out, providing the project with real-time estimates of risk in response to current events. At the end of 2018, forthcoming elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other factors, led forecasters to increase the consensus judgment that a mass killing would occur from 5% risk at the beginning of November to 25% risk at the end of the year. (Elections can trigger group targeted violence; in the case of the DRC, there was uncertainty on whether the ruling party would cede power.) This kind of dramatic jump is rare; a similar increase was seen in the consensus judgment on Burma/Myanmar in August-September of 2016, following news about an escalation of violence against Rohingya populations.

The final method employed by the project is more traditional: qualitative field research projects in selected countries, designed to provide depth, context, and policy recommendations on countries at risk. For countries meriting such analysis—thus far, Zimbabwe (2016), Bangladesh (2017), Mali (2018), and Ivory Coast (2019)—the Early Warning Project team works with experts to conduct research in the country to help the international community better understand the risk factors present.

As the example of Burma illustrates, there is a long way to go in catalyzing responses that can prevent genocide, but tools like the Early Warning Project can provide critical information to help policymakers and NGOs recognize and respond to humanitarian catastrophes before genocide occurs. For many of the countries highlighted in the recently released statistical assessment, it is not too late for effective prevention that can save lives.
On 15th February, the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda and the Vice-President of the United States Mike Pence together with their spouses visited the Auschwitz Memorial and Museum. They were accompanied on the tour of the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp by the director of the Museum, Dr. Piotr M.A. Cywiński. Other guests included the President of the World Jewish Congress Ronald S. Lauder, Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich and Franciscan friar Rev. Piotr Cuber, guardian of the St. Maximilian Center in Harmęże.

All photos in the article: Jarosław Praszkiewicz
The presidents visited an extensive section of the Museum exposition, among others Block 4, containing basic information about people deported to Auschwitz: Jews, Poles, the Roma, Soviet prisoners of war and representatives of other nationalities and groups imprisoned by the Germans in the camp. The block also houses a model of the gas chamber and crematorium II at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, empty cans of Zyklon B, as well as human hair cut off from the murdered victims.

In Block 5, the guests saw personal objects of victims that were found in these storage rooms after the liberation of the camp. These include shoes, suitcases, prosthesis, glasses, brushes, kitchen utensils etc.

Andrzej Duda and Mike Pence laid wreaths and paid tribute to all the victims of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp at the Execution Wall in the courtyard of block 11, where the Germans executed approximately 5,500 people, mostly Poles, prisoners detained in the camp prison and the so-called political prisoners sentenced to death by the Gestapo summary court.

Then the presidents descended into the basement of Block 11, which housed the camp prison. Here, the saw among others, the starvation cell where Franciscan friar, Rev. Maximilian Kolbe was murdered in August 1941. In the basements of block 11, in September 1941, the Germans made the first mass attempt to murder people using Zyklon B.

The visitors also visited the Jewish “Shoah” exhibition prepared by the Yad Vashem in Block 27. The subsequent rooms are dedicated, among others, to the life of the Jews before the war, the ideology of German Nazis, and the extermination of Jews in the German-occupied territory of Europe. One of the rooms is dedicated to the memory of children murdered during the Holocaust.

In the building of the first gas chamber and crematorium in Auschwitz I Agata Kornhauser-Duda and Karen Pence both left one red rose.
In the second part of the visit, the guests saw the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp, among others, a freight wagon standing on the unloading ramp, which from May 1944 was used to transport deportees to the camp - primarily Jews, from Hungary and the liquidated Litzmannstadt ghetto, but also Poles deported to Auschwitz from the Warsaw Uprising. At the ramp, the SS doctors conducted a selection of the newly-arrived Jews, usually referring most of the deportees to instant death in the gas chambers.

At the ramp, the director of the Auschwitz Museum Dr Piotr M. A. Cywiński showed the guests one of the original passports from the Eiss Archive, which documents rescue operations conducted from Bern during World War II by the then Polish ambassador Aleksander Ładoś and his diplomats, as well as the cooperating Jewish organisations. During these operations, several thousand illegally obtained Latin American passports were issued, thereby saving the lives of several hundreds of people. These documents were recovered, thanks to the joint efforts of the Polish Embassy in Bern, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, where the Archive will be examined and preserved.

‘Auschwitz shows the infinite ability of humankind to dehumanise other human beings. This is a history of extreme dehumanisation. From the very beginning, the world realised that the remains of camps must serve as a dire warning. Nevertheless, in order for this warning to be effective, education has to stir people’s imagination of their own responsibility for fighting evil. Such attitude was demonstrated during the war by Polish diplomats, among other, in Switzerland who falsified documents like this one to save a fellow human,’ said Piotr M. A. Cywiński.

‘If we can arouse the human imagination, only then will memory succeed in changing views, behaviours and attitudes. Man must continuously feel the yoke of his daily responsibility for the modern world. That is why we teach about this tragic past,’ emphasised Piotr Cywiński.

The presidents also saw the ruins of the gas chamber and crematorium III and laid grave candles at the monument commemorating the victims of the camp. At the end of the visit, President Andrzej Duda, Vice-President Mike Pence and their spouses signed into the Museum’s Visitor’s book.
"We are guardians of memory and the truth about genocide that was committed here, at the largest German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, which is the symbol of the Holocaust, place of extermination of the Jews, martyrdom of Poles, Porajmos of the Roma and Sinti, mass deaths of Soviet prisoners and representatives of other nationalities. We will never relent in our fight against evil” - wrote the Polish presidential couple.

"May Auschwitz be a reminder to all people and all times that to fall silent in the face of evil is to ensure its triumph” - the Vice-President of the United States and his wife wrote.

'I am especially pleased and gratified that Vice President Mike Pence and Polish President Andrzej Duda are taking time out of their very busy schedules to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial. 74 years after the liberation of this concentration and extermination camp, a horrible site where over one million innocent Jews, Poles, Roma and Sinti, Soviet POWs and others were slaughtered, we are still trying to make sense of this horrible atrocity,' Said Ronald S. Lauder, President of the World Jewish Congress and Chairman of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation (USA).

‘Vice President Pence along with President Duda honor the victims of this crime with their visit and demonstrates the commitment to preserving the memory of Auschwitz, as well as the importance of reminding the world what occurred here. By knowing the past, we are better equipped to make sure that crimes like this never occur again,’ he added.
CRIMES UNCOVERED: THE FIRST GENERATION OF HOLOCAUST RESEARCHERS

The Wiener Library’s spring exhibition traces the stories and legacies of those individuals and institutions who first collected evidence of crimes of the Holocaust: from those who carried out this work as genocide unfolded around them, to those who later pursued justice and remembrance.
Eva Reichmann c.1950s, who launched one of the earliest projects to collect eye-witness testimonies to the Holocaust, Wiener Library Collections
The exhibition commemorates the life and work of some of these pioneers of Holocaust research. Among others, the stories are told of: Emmanuel Ringelblum and Rachel Auerbach, whose Oyneg Shabbos organisation gathered and concealed evidence from inside the Warsaw Ghetto; Raphael Lemkin, who used the information he amassed about the atrocities of the Holocaust to develop the legal concept of genocide; Vasily Grossman, who documented the extermination of Soviet Jews; Filip Müller, who collected evidence of the Nazi crimes being committed whilst imprisoned in Auschwitz; Alfred Wiener, founder of The Wiener Library, who collected and disseminated evidence of Nazi activities from the mid-1920s onwards, as well as the Library’s Eva Reichmann, who launched one of the earliest projects to collect eye-witness testimonies of the Holocaust.

For the ‘first generation’ of Holocaust researchers, their efforts were particularly urgent in the face of Nazi efforts to eradicate all traces of Jewish existence from Europe. Under the most adverse conditions and often against indifference, denunciation and violence, they shaped the foundations of our current knowledge of the Holocaust. Today, institutions such as The Wiener Library extend this legacy by continuing to collect and preserve vital evidence and testimonies. This temporary exhibition will offer visitors the unique opportunity to view original documents from the Library’s extensive archive collection, including some of the earliest eye-witness testimonies from Holocaust survivors ever to be recorded.

To find out more about the exhibition, visit: https://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/crimes-uncovered

Crimes Uncovered: The First Generation of Holocaust Researchers will be on show from 27 February 2019 – 17 May 2019.

This exhibition is produced in collaboration with the Wannsee Conference Memorial and Touro College Berlin, and with the generous support of The Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany.

THE FIRST DOCUMENTATION OF THE HOLOCAUST IN POLAND AND FRANCE

On January 17, 2019, a panel discussion was held at the E. Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw titled “The first documentation of the Holocaust”, featuring guests from Mémorial de la Shoah (director Jacques Fredj and Dr. Audrey Kichelewski), the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum (director Dr. Piotr M.A. Cywiński) and the Jewish Historical Institute: Dr. Katarzyna Person, Dr. Agnieszka Żółkiewska and the moderator Prof. Andrzej Żbikowski.
The discussion was aimed at discussing the challenges faced by the first documentarians of the Holocaust (active during the war) and a comparison of the experiences of Polish and French memory institutions in the post-war years. In the course of the discussion, a presentation was also given on the first accounts of the Holocaust available in the archives of these institutions. As Prof. Żbikowski noted, these materials are “the most authentic, heartbreaking, touching,” and therefore modern Holocaust scholars continuously return to them.

Katarzyna Person, head of the Polish and English edition of the Ringelblum Archive at the Jewish Historical Institute spoke about the subsequent stages of the work of the Oneg Sabbath Group, which included: collecting documents (among others, accounts of inhabitants of other towns, people returning from war wandering, testimonies from labour camps), developing materials and informing about the Holocaust (an underground news bulletin on the subject of murders and deportations from other towns, reports containing the estimated numbers of victims). The Ringelblum Archive is a unique source of current reports on the fate of Jews in occupied Warsaw from the outbreak of the war to the closure of the ghetto, i.e., in the period of growing antisemitic propaganda and consent to violence against Jews. This period, referred in literature as “continuous pogrom” - was displaced from the consciousness of the Warsaw Jews and the researchers of their fate through subsequent drastic events: the closure of the ghetto, indirect extermination, and ultimately the Holocaust. This displacement was also continued in post-war research, which focused primarily on the in-depth study of Holocaust history.
Agnieszka Żółkiewska spoke about the tasks and challenges faced by the Jewish Historical Commission established on 29 August 1944. The work of the Commission included gathering, organising and developing materials documenting the Holocaust. The area in which the Commission intensively developed its activity and achieved the greatest success was the recording of the accounts of Holocaust survivors. The primary purpose of collecting these materials was the “disclosure and trial of German crimes committed against the Jewish populations in Poland,” as well as the promotion of the collected materials.

Files were gathered documenting the activities of German offices, the Gestapo, Jewish organisations and institutions, underground, ghetto and guerrilla organisations, as well as plans of ghettos and camps. Crime tools and human remains were gathered, referred to as “exhibits of terror” by employees of the Commission. The Committee also took an interest in the fate of pre-war Jewish collections, archives, museums and libraries. It gathered surviving paintings, synagogue art, museum objects and books. The outcome of the Commission’s activity is impressive. It collected about 3,000 accounts of survivors, 100 diaries, several hundred literary works, an impressive collection of camp and ghetto correspondence, more than 5,000 files and 4,000 photographs. All of the resources collected by the Commission are to date the most important source of knowledge about the Holocaust.

The guests from Mémorial de la Shoah spoke about the beginnings of research on the Holocaust in France. Jacques Fredj recalled that as was the case in Poland, research on the Holocaust organised by the Jewish community began during the war. As early as April 1943, Rabbi Isaac Schneersohn started to collect documents related to crimes against the Jews by the Germans and the Vichy government. Owing to these documents, the first French organisation was founded, conducting research on the Holocaust, collecting documents and publishing early studies on this subject: Centre de documentation juive contemporaine (currently, Centre de documentation du Mémorial de la Shoah). These archives are essential for historians examining the policy of the perpetrators, behaviour of the victims and the contemporary history of the Jews in France.

Audrey Kichelewski spoke about publications: the magazine Le Bulletin du Centre de documentation juive contemporaine, books published until 1950, and the communist institution founded by Jewish activists called Union des Juifs pour la Résistance et l'Entraide (UJRE), which organised a public exhibition about life in the Polish ghettos in 1946 (it was seen by approx. 100,000 people; another exhibition concerned the Jewish resistance movement). Audrey Kichelewski also recalled the yizker bikers (memoirs), including an extremely valuable and interesting example of cooperation between Jews from Poland and France - the 1951 publication about Lublin containing excerpts from a journal by Emanuel Ringelblum. In her summary, she drew attention to the hybridity of post-war publications common to France and Poland, in which one can discern both documentary, historical, sociological, literary, poetic elements, as well as many others.

The last speaker was Piotr M. A. Cywiński, director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. His speech concerned reports preserved in the Museum archives: dramatic accounts of Sonderkommando members closely related to what happened during the war, obtained immediately after the war - in connection with the ongoing trials of Nazi criminals – Letters, in which former prisoners described their fates (more than 100 volumes of “Statements”), and broader studies and memoirs (approx. 300 volumes) created in subsequent years.
These reports evolved over the years, both in terms of volume and form: in the first short statements, the focus was primarily on the facts; but with time emotions began to play a crucial role.

In summarising the discussion, Piotr M.A. Cywiński posed the question: to what extent does the integrity of the authenticity of a memorial site encompass archival integrity. Consequently, he drew attention to the differences in the examination of documents in situ and in memory institutions separated from the memorial site (e.g. in museum narratives). Piotr M.A. Cywiński underlined that the biggest task facing scholars of the Holocaust is the need to translate the accounts of the Holocaust written in several languages into lingua franca and make them available in a digital version. Only then will the first accounts of the Holocaust be heard by the modern world.

The video coverage of the meeting is available on the YouTube Channel of the Jewish Historical Institute (in Polish and French)
The Jewish Museum in Oświęcim has just published a book about the local Jewish cemetery which offers a glimpse into its history and current condition.

The book is divided into four sections, each shedding light onto different aspects of the beit kvarot in the town of Oświęcim. In ‘History’, the museum’s chief curator Dr. Artur Szyndler elaborates on the origins of the current cemetery as well as its development, destruction during the Holocaust and postwar renovation projects by a handful of survivors and private organizations. The ‘People’ section features notable members of the community buried at the cemetery. In ‘Symbols’, readers can explore both the rich and diverse symbols carved on the tombstones in Oświęcim as well as educate themselves about Jewish burial traditions in this part of Polish lands across centuries. The ‘Nature’ part talks about the unique biodiversity of the cemetery: the fauna, including birds, and the trees and plants at the site. All texts are illustrated with high quality photographs of the space, the tombstones and their details. The book is available in Polish and English at Cafe Bergson.
This publication of the Jewish Museum in Oświęcim was made possible with the generous support of the Town of Oświęcim.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center (est. 2000) in Oświęcim operates the Jewish Museum, the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot synagogue and Cafe Bergson, which is located in the house of the last Jewish resident of Oświęcim, Szymon Kluger z"l.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center is an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in NYC. For more information about the Auschwitz Jewish Center please visit www.ajcf.pl.

SYMBOLS

In addition to text with information about who the deceased was, we also encounter symbolic elements. Most often these are engravings that crown epitaphs, fulfilling a decorative function and sometimes also bearing symbolic value. The origins of the symbols can be found in Judaism, history, the traditions of the Israelites, and also in mysticism. It is worth remembering that the commandment: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness [of any thing] that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth,” likewise set the pattern in which symbolic imagery on tombstones should develop. Bearing these instructions in mind, rabbis permitted sculptural imagery, provided that it was not idolatrous. Portrayals of humans were forbidden, especially the face of the deceased. In the Oświęcim cemetery one most frequently comes across three symbols: the crown, the palm tree and the five-branched candleholder.
Half a year ago, we – Saskia, Anne, Marlena, Svenja and Theo - from Rahel-Varnhagen-Kolleg in Hagen asked ourselves this question and we would like to share our new findings with you.
It all started with our history teacher, Mr. Arias, who came to us in mid-2018 and familiarized us with biographies of victims from the Nazi era. At first, we thought to ourselves: What do we have to do with it? But we were soon able to answer the question to ourselves.

First of all, let us illustrate what Stolpersteine are. Stolpersteine are small metal plates that are set into the pavement and about which one should "stumble" (German “stolpern”) in the truest sense of the word. They are about the size of a palm and are equipped with information, such as the name and year of birth of victims of the Nazi era. The stones are located at the former place of residence of persons persecuted by the Nazis.

Now some of these Stolpersteine have been digitized. This means that in addition to the already existing basic data, one can also call up life stories, pictures and audio files about the persons on the internet. The audio files are not only available in one language. The files can be listened to in selected languages, such as Italian, English or Russian.

This is a picture of our school. It was done at the end of January 2019 when it snowed.
This is an example for a Stolperstein. This one belongs to Heinrich Bohne, who was a resistance fighter in the Nazi era.

These are the Stolpersteine which were set into the pavements of Hagen on 7th December 2018.

- **Heinrich König**, Priester
  Oberer Altlohweg 14

- **Heinrich Bohne**, Widerstandskämpfer
  Kreuzung Cunostr. / Birkenhain

- **Eduard Dunker**, Kriegsverweigerer
  Franzstraße 79

- **Ernst Putzki**, Mensch mit Behinderung
  Franklinstr. 21

- **Moritz Apt**, Jüdisches Opfer
  Friedensstraße 47

- **August Drefsen**, Gewerkschafter
  Wielandplatz

- **Nicola Sinesi**, Italienischer Zwangsarbeiter
  Droste-Hülshoff Str. 27

These are the Stolpersteine which were set into the pavements of Hagen on 7th December 2018.
We have decided to join a project course on digitizing the Stolpersteine of some victims from Hagen. In order to digitize the stumbling blocks, research must first be carried out. Afterwards, the researched data will be revised, summarized and finally translated into different languages. These are then set to music by us and inserted in a digital map by professionals of the city of Hagen. The digital map shows where each of the Stolpersteine is situated in Hagen and where additional information can be called up by clicking on them. So far, 14 digital Stolpersteine have been provided with information and significantly more are intended.

Now the question arises - why have we just dealt with this topic?

We have dealt with it because we have developed a great deal of interest through the research work and want to reach many more people with it. In addition, through our commitment, we want to give the victims a voice that was stolen from them by the Nazi regime. By working with the individual biographies, the subject gets much more depth and the victims become vivid human beings, even if we actually do not know them personally. The Stolpersteine of the victims should serve as a lasting memory for us, but above all for the family members of present and future generations. In addition, a ceremonial placement of Stolpersteine in Hagen took place on December 7, 2018, in which seven more stones were placed. We were allowed to accompany them with our history teacher.

We hope that this project will help young people to realize that what happened then also happened on their own doorstep and that they should not only be confronted with it in the history books. In addition, through a better education on the subject we want to show that especially the present generation has the "task" to make sure that such events don't ever happen again.

It is very important in this day and age to be critical of the media and learn to do your own research. In addition, you should always be able to see the situation first-hand and not be distracted by the opinion of others. It can also be helpful to talk to others about this topic and ask questions.

Finally, we want to share that it is very interesting, exciting and touching at the same time to deal with this sensitive topic. For us the work in the project course is a great enrichment and we are glad to be part of it.
When talking about the history of Zagłębie (Polish coal basin), one cannot underestimate the role the Jewish community played in the development of the region. Until the outbreak of World War II, the Jews conducted both production and craft activities. They actively participated in economic life. At the turn of 1938 and 1939, the Jews accounted for 20% and 44% of the total population in Sosnowiec and Będzin, respectively. Over 50,000 Jews lived in these two Zagłębie cities. After the war, there were only 1,400 of them. What fate befell nearly 50,000 people? I believe we are all aware. Plenty of publications, scientific papers are created, from which we can derive knowledge about the Holocaust, but nothing can convey the emotions and climate of those times, just like the direct accounts of witnesses. The uniqueness of the exhibition “In the eyes of young people. Life and death in the Będzin ghetto”, lies in the fact that these are the memories of young people.

The exhibition is the outcome of a research project implemented in the Martin-Springer Institute at the Northern Arizona University, conducted under the supervision of Björn Krondorfer, PhD and Martin Kalb, PhD. The project was implemented from January 2013 to the spring of 2014. Students who performed historical studies, conducted interviews with survivors and developed the substantive concept of the exhibition, were actively involved in the project. Martin-Springer Institute was founded in 2000 by Doris and Martin Springer. Doris (née Szpringer) was born in Będzin in 1926, as the daughter of Abraham and Perli Baili Golenzer. She researches the period of the Holocaust, promotes the attitude of tolerance and justice.

The Project - In the eyes of young people. Life and death in the Będzin ghetto was presented to date in the United States. It is currently on display to visitors at the Sosnowiec Art Centre - Sielecki Castle in Sosnowiec (fully available in Polish). The exhibition presents thirty display-boards showing the viewer the history of life in the Będzin ghetto, and collections from the Rutka Laskier Foundation, consisting of extremely valuable historical and sentimental authentic objects discovered in the area of the Będzin ghetto. Due to the unique nature of the presented biographical materials, which are mostly unavailable in Poland (the Rutka Laskier Diary is an exception) the substantive value of the project is enormous. The photographic materials on exhibition come from the following collections: Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Ghetto Fighters’ House Museum in Israel and private collections.

The history of life in the ghetto is reported from the perspective of eight young people: Jane Lipski, Rose Rechnic, Rutka Laskier, Elli Liebermann-Shiber, Hadassah Broder, Sam Pivnik, Arnold Shay and Doris Martin.
Thanks to these accounts, the viewer wanders around pre-war Będzin, a city where about 50% of the population were Jews. In his or imagination, the viewer transfers to a place bustling with life, where Jewish children attended schools and looked with hope into the future. The situation changed on September 4, 1939, when the Germans entered the city. The area of Zagłębie Dąbrowskie was incorporated into the Third Reich. The Central Office of the Jewish Council of Elders in East Upper Silesia was established, headed by Mosze Merin. A controversial figure, but crucial when we talk about the period of the II World War in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie.

The exhibition aims to approximate both the tragic events of the entire Jewish community of Będzin, as well as sensitivity to the existential experience of the individual and which is the purpose of the rich stock of photos on exhibition. The photographic material correlates with quoted fragments of memories and witnesses’ accounts. The fates of our heroes lead us all through to the end of World War II. Rutka and Hadassah did not live to see the liberation. Their history ended in Auschwitz. The survivors’ accounts lead the viewer until the implementation of the project.
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