NEW HOLOCAUST MUSEUM IN MACEDONIAN SKOPJE. AN INTERVIEW WITH ITS CO-AUTHOR MICHAEL BERENBAUM.

TESTIMONIES OF LIFE FROM THE SITE OF EXTERMINATION.
CONCEALED CATEGORY. A TEMPORARY EXHIBITION OF THE STUTTHOF MUSEUM.
SPEAKING MEMORIES. THE LAST WITNESSES OF THE HOLOCAUST. EXHIBITION IN STOCKHOLM.
"LIGHT OF REMEMBRANCE" AWARD FOR SARA J. BLOOMFIELD, THE DIRECTOR OF USHMM.
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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

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“Auschwitz - Never again! – Really?” - is the motto of the International Educational Conference, which will take place from 1-4 July 2019 at the Auschwitz Memorial. The topics of lectures and discussions will concern education in the context of preventing genocide and crimes against humanity. Honorary patronage: Prof. Piotr Gliński, the minister of culture and national heritage of Poland.

Now we run the call for papers to participate in the open-call panel on the 2nd of July, from 15.00 to 17.00, entitled "History is repeating. From the past to the present. From the present to the past."

The panel will address several questions:

Why do we forget?
Why conflicts occur?

Do we need to experience war to feel concerned?
How geography influence the way we look at other conflicts?
How can we act? How can we teach?

The topics can be very specific, speaking about one conflict for example, or as well really general. Each presentation should last 20 minutes and the languages of the conference are English and Polish.

To apply, please fill in the google form until 31 March 2019. Recruitment results will be sent until 5 April 2019. The Museum will cover the costs of accommodation (single room) and board, as well as the travel ticket.
In December 2018, the Auschwitz Memorial gained more than 120,000 Twitter followers in about five days, according to memorial officials. The growth came not from paid advertising or any concerted campaign. It was motivated by Twitter users rushing to support the memorial against a flurry of anti-Semitic tweets. Three months later, the account is over 300,000 followers.

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Eddy Hammel was the first U.S.-born player to compete at the highest level of European soccer, but his Holocaust story—not his stardom with Ajax Amsterdam—is the reason he must never be forgotten.

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Thousands of Jews escaped the extermination thanks to a Spanish diplomat nicknamed "the Angel of Budapest" - yet the late Angel Sanz Briz is hardly known in Spain today. His improvised heroics in 1944 saved more than 5,000 Hungarian Jews from deportation to Auschwitz.

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Janine Webber: The Holocaust survivor fighting prejudice through hip hop. The 86-year-old tells Jack Dutton how she teamed up with rapper Kapoo to make a short film, 'Edek', named after the Polish man who hid her during the Holocaust.

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In March in Skopje in Macedonia a new Holocaust Museum was opened. It commemorates 8,000 pre-World War II local Jewish community that was almost entirely destroyed during the Holocaust. Paweł Sawicki talked to Michael Berenbaum, one of the co-authors of the new museum.

Ninety-eight per cent of the Jews of Macedonia were murdered in Treblinka during the Holocaust. Today the Jewish community there is very small. Can you see any specificity of the memory shaped there? The new museum tells the long history of Macedonian Jews - one of the most ancient ones which is a history in itself, isn’t it?

The history of Macedonian Jewry is indeed ancient and that story is told in the Museum. The oldest known synagogue outside of the Land of Israel is in Stobi, Macedonia, a 45-minute drive from Skopje. The Museum displays a replica of the synagogue’s pillar and its inscription. St. Paul preached in Macedonia during the First Century, CE. Macedonian Jews also trace their roots to Spain, where Jews, Christians and Muslims lived in a economically, artistically and intellectually enriching harmony, studying each other’s philosophy and scholarship, writing religious and secular poetry in Arabic, preserving Greco-Roman civilization for Christian Europe—Plato and Aristotle, as well as Thucydides. The Museum also tells this story as well as the story of the Expulsion.

The Jews of Spain were expelled in 1492 by Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand and in 1497 from Portugal. Bayezide II, Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, sent ships to welcome Jews who brought with them the printing press, steel, commerce, medicine and trade. A replica of the printing press is featured in the Museum. The Jews in the Balkans preserved their own Spanish traditions and spoke Ladino, a Judeo-Spanish language, much in the way Yiddish was spoken among Ashkenazi Jews. Visitors see the costumes the Jews wore, they hear the songs that were sung and the proverbs that depicted daily life and Ladino culture.

The most important Jewish artifact in the Balkans, the Sarajevo Haggadah, is an illuminated manuscript of the Passover Seder service, commissioned in Spain in 1350. It was sent into exile along with its owners during the Inquisition in 1492 and made its way to Italy. It came to the Balkans and was saved from destruction three times: during World War I, during the Holocaust and during the siege of Sarajevo in 1990. Both in World War II and in Sarajevo, Muslims risked their lives to save this Jewish artifact that tells the story of Passover—the saga of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt, the archetypal story of freedom. The Museum features a film first aired on ABC Nightline program that tells the story of the Sarajevo Haggadah and its repeated rescue.

The Balkans was also where Shabbatei Tzvi, the false Messiah, founded his popular movement. When confronted in 1666 with the choice between conversion to Islam or death, he chose to convert, much to the astonishment of his followers. The grave of his “John the Baptist”—Nathan of Gaza—who preached and publicized Shabbatei Tzvi’s Messianic mission, was just a few hundred meters from the Museum before it was swallowed up in the 1963 earthquake that destroyed Skopje’s Jewish quarter, which had already been bereft of its Jews.
This history is recounted in the Museum along with a depiction for an overwhelmingly non-Jewish audience of the formative ideas and teachings of Judaism and the practices of Jews. It includes the role the Jews played in the Balkans and the distinguished Jewish communities of Monastir (current day Bitola), Stip and Skopje. This history also includes the Bulgarian occupation and the unique fate of Macedonian Jews during the Holocaust.

Is the Ladino spirit present in the exhibition?

Ladino culture, its traditions, language, music and dress, are featured in the Museum. Common proverbs are used to recount the daily life of Macedonian Jews—describing relations between men and women, between Jews and non-Jewish neighbors, to give a sense of the Jewish home where Ladino was spoken, and to pay homage was paid to its great traditions.

Ladino culture and language were virtually destroyed during the Holocaust. The language enjoys a slight revival in Jewish culture and among scholars, but unlike Yiddish, which has been preserved by Haredi Jews who speak it as a daily language, there are few Jews who continue to speak Ladino in daily life.

The core of the history of the destruction of Macedonian Jews are three deportations by train in March 1943. This is the epicenter of the tragedy. What is the broader context of events?

As Museum creators, my design partner Edward Jacobs and I were deeply mindful of describing the Macedonian Jewish experience during the Holocaust in context, therefore we had to depict what was happening outside Macedonia. Twice we present in detail the entire story of the Holocaust. The first time is in an exhibition that presents a significant film on the rise of Nazism from end of World War I to the invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia.

The centerpiece of the exhibition is the Museum’s presentation on the Holocaust of Macedonian Jewry.

We begin with the Bulgarian occupation, including survivor testimonies about the beginning of the war, life under occupation, and the daily struggle to survive. Bulgaria granted Bulgarian citizenship to all Macedonians, except Jews. They imposed special taxes and penalties on the Jews and forced them to wear Jewish Stars.

On March 11, 1943 they deported Jews from their homes into a ghetto at the Monopol tobacco factory in Skopje, where, for less than a fortnight, they incarcerated some 7,300 Jews, and then deported 7,144 Jews to Treblinka where all 7,144 were murdered. Not a single person who boarded those trains returned from Treblinka -- not one. The only Jews who survived in Macedonia had gone into hiding, joined the resistance, held foreign passports or were physicians and pharmacists, indispensable and irreplaceable for the health of country.

Visitors then descend a flight of stairs that leads to an exhibition about Monopol ghetto. Suitcases, filled with possessions the Jews brought with them, hang open from the ceiling, displaying how the entire life of the Jew were condensed into a single suitcase. Visitors view survivor testimonies about life in during the three weeks they spent in Monopol and watch another film about the deportation to Treblinka and the experience on the freight train car to a the death camp.

On display are the actual Monopol windows from which 6 year-old Isaak Adizes watched the deportation of his family and we hear his testimony. We see the original envelopes Jews filled out with lists of their property and the receipts given by the Bulgarians to them to fool them into believing that all would be returned.

And then the visitor enters a railroad cattle car of the type used by the Bulgarians to transport Jews from Monopol to Treblinka, the Nazi death camp in German-occupied Poland.
Exiting the train car, the visitor is confronted by a Soviet tank engine whose exhaust was pumped into Treblinka's gas chambers. There is a model of Treblinka and a film with Samuel Willenberg's testimony. He was one of the last survivors of Treblinka and died in 2016.

After encountering the fate of Macedonian Jews, we encounter the Holocaust outside Macedonia. We learn about the Wannsee Conference, where the Final Solution—the murder of all Jews, men, women and children—became the announced policy of the German State.

The visitor learns about the Einsatzgruppen, the mobile killers in the former Soviet territories invaded by the Germans, who together with local gendarmeries, antisemites, murderous militiamen and even ordinary neighbors, murdered more than 1.5 million Jews, town by town, village by village, bullet by bullet.

Then the visitor enters exhibitions about the five other death camps -- Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek and, of course, Auschwitz.

The paradox is that the deportation of Jews from Bulgarian-occupied territories triggered resistance and protest. It is an important story within the context of the Holocaust in occupied Europe.

When leaving the exhibition on the Death Camps, the visitor sees the alternatives to deportation—Resistance and Hiding. In Macedonia, Jews joined their fellow Yugoslavians and fought as an integral part of the Resistance. A grand mural depicting the resistance covers two floors of the Museum. Moshe Piade, a Jew, was Josip Broz Tito's second in command. Tito was the leader of the Communist Party and led the revolution and the partisans.

We watch a film about the resistance, with testimonies of Jews who fought with their fellow Macedonians, and not in separate Jewish units. They commanded Macedonian Partisan Units and were named heroes of the nation. These testimonies are heard, some weapons are seen, and the visitor begins to comprehend the scope and importance of Macedonian Jewish resistance.
Centuries of the history of Jews of Macedonia ended in a blink of an eye. Is there a way to represent this horrifying dynamic? How does one show what was lost?

The visitor is reminded of these losses at four different times: As the visitor enters the Museum, he/she sees pictures of the dead in frames, some frames are empty for the faceless, nameless victims and others are mirrors, because it could have been the visitor who was lost.

The Memorial, in the space beyond the gallery, features fragments of gravestones, ashes from Treblinka and most importantly, the names of the 7,144 Jews who were deported and murdered in Treblinka.

An extraordinary Memorial composed of 7,144 beads runs throughout the Museum. Designed brilliantly by Edward Jacobs, it hangs above the three stories of the Museum. The visitor first sees this beaded Memorial after the ending of the orientation film, when the theater roof opens to provide a glimpse of the Memorial itself, which is colorful and individual -, each strand is different. As the visitor traverses the galleries, the Memorial changes, depending on the viewer’s point of view and what floor they are on. Visitors gain understanding of what was lost after leaving the gallery of Liberation to enter the Presence of Absence, a room where frames contain the fading images of the dead, reminding us precisely of who was lost, their presence felt even in their absence.

We see the Jews who were annihilated: we remember them, we bear witness to them. They call out of us: “Remember, don’t let the world forget, Never Again, not to the Jewish people, not to any people.”

Is there a place in the new museum you believe will be a seminal memorable experience for people who visit?

The natural “pilgrimage” from the Bulgarian occupation, by descending the stairs into Monopol and then walking through the wagon to an exhibition on Treblinka is regarded by many visitors as the most transformative experience in the Museum.
Why should people who never heard about Jewish life in Macedonia look at this history? What universal message comes from this specific local context.

This Museum is designed for a universal audience. We were deeply aware that there are few Jews in Macedonia and throughout the Balkans. We know Macedonia is unique because this region has known genocide after the Holocaust. The final film has Macedonian Human Rights leaders grappling with the answer to the profound question: What is the meaning of the Holocaust at this moment in time, in this region?

Their answers are multi-layered and complex, yet also simple. "We can do better. We must do better! We remember the past to plead for human dignity and decency, to enlarge the domain of moral responsibility."

"We remember the past to transform the future. We must salvage life from the ashes. The Holocaust must be a warning and not a harbinger of things to come."

A visitor will walk out of the Museum into the contemporary world which is complex and difficult; where antisemitism and xenophobia are on the rise everywhere. How much context for today can we find in a museum about yesterday?

My design partner Edward Jacobs, the Museum Director Goran Sadikarijo, the Board and I were guided by two commitments: to transmit the history and how to offer that history to a generation of visitors that did not experience it but must learn emotionally moving and morally compelling lessons from it.

We believe the Museum must tell a story with integrity and depth, in a way that makes its viscerally present to its visitors. Sadly, tragically, the story of the Holocaust resonates today in ways that it has not in the decades since it happened. By not preaching or propagandizing to the audience, we leave them room to apply what they have seen to the world today. We can give hundreds of parallel examples. Perhaps two will suffice:

By understanding how the Nazis came into power, the visitor earns an appreciation of the precariousness of democracy, and how precious it is. They see the importance of respect for human rights and dignity and should be able to recognize the dangers of polarization and political violence and—and if the lessons did take hold, work to prevent it.

From the exhibition on Bulgarian occupation, the visitor learns how citizenship is an essential protection of all rights yet on the other hand, the visitor comes to understand the perils of a society closing itself off—by closing one’s borders to those in need of refuge.

I dream that one day we can live in a world where the concluding exhibit in a Holocaust Museum could dismiss the evil that 20th century humanity perpetrated as an aberration, believing that we could not ever behave that way, or be racist in that way, or be xenophobic that way, or be antisemitic that way. But today’s world shows us we can be exactly like them. The difference is that we are not powerless to stand up to injustice. We just have to be willing to act to uphold it.

I dream of living in a world where the Holocaust is irrelevant because we care about each other, because we respect each other’s humanity. We would have nothing to say because we are so much better and think so differently from the people of those terrible days.

Sadly, tragically—shamefully—that is not our world.
TESTIMONIES OF LIFE FROM THE PLACES OF EXTERMINATION.

Personal documents and photographs as a source of knowledge on the fates of victims of German concentration and extermination camps at Majdanek, in Sobibór and Belżec

The archival resources of the State Museum at Majdanek (APMM) contain a group of very interesting materials, which were developed relatively late and therefore could not be effectively used for museum purposes for quite a long time. It concerns private documents and photographs found at Majdanek after the liquidation of the camp and on the grounds of the former labour camp at the so-called Flugplatz in Lublin, where the Germans segregated the property plundered from the Jewish victims of Operation Reinhardt.  

Kennkarte of Jan Ściuba, the son (all images in the article: the State Museum at Majdanek)
Documents, photos and other personal items, which had no material value, were systematically destroyed by the Germans. However, the necessity to evacuate Lublin in July 1944 and the ensuing urgency meant that they were unable to burn all the personal remains of the victims and in so doing erase the traces of their crimes. After the warfare ended in Lublin, more than 2 thousand private documents and about 800 photographs from Majdanek and Flugplatz were found and secured.

These items must have been of vital importance to the owners as they were taken with them when they left home. The materials include private letters, official letters, identity cards, kennkarte, J-ausweis, ID cards, passports, school certificates, postcards and greeting cards, service receipts, memoirs and notebooks, property deeds and business documents such as commercial orders, delivery notes and others. The documents were written mainly in Polish and German, but also in Russian, French, Italian, Greek, Spanish and Dutch.

The core of the collection consists of 1244 documents that contain personal details of alleged victims or their relatives. The text is dedicated to this group of sources and their role in research on the history of KL Lublin and the German death camps in Betžec and Sobibór.
In principle, the preparation of this collection is still ongoing, as new information on the persons mentioned in the documents is still being collected. They come mainly from online databases of people persecuted during the National Socialist period, which were made available by institutions such as Yad Vashem in Israel, the Federal Archive in Germany, the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Documentation Archive of the Austrian Resistance Movement in Vienna and smaller civic initiatives implemented mainly in Niemczech.

The information obtained made it easier to organise the collection, e.g. by separating the collection of documents concerning a given person or family and determining the fate of that person or family. Work is in progress on the final compilation of this group of archival materials, which will culminate in an inventory database created especially for this unique collection.

The archival collection described above is particularly dear to the author of this text because it was the first she encountered upon embarking on her archival adventure, in 1999. The first task she had to face was to arrange and describe private documents found after the war and stored in the museum archive.

It is also worth mentioning that access to the Internet was not an obvious fact at the time. Besides, the mentioned databases were also not ready yet. The compilation of the collection boiled down to the description of each document, i.e. taking note of the names, names of places and dates, assessment of the physical state, providing information about the language in which it was compiled. Sometimes it was necessary to combine several cards into one document. Occasionally, they were also scattered in several volumes. It is particularly true in the case of pleadings, where several names were mentioned.

The bad physical condition of this group of archival materials was also a major obstacle to their development. Prior to the discovery, they had lain for a long time in the ground or on rubbish dumps and were exposed to adverse weather conditions. Some documents are almost illegible because of the blurred ink, with discolourations and paper gaps. Many of them have traces of mould, moisture, rust and dirt stains. During work on them, the author repeatedly encountered mud residues glued to the paper. Occasionally, the cards - initially soaked - were so glued together that it was impossible to separate them under normal archival conditions.

Not until the conservation of the described archives (at the end of the project) did the situation change and enabled the Museum staff to effectively use the potential of this group of materials for museum purposes, chiefly for educational and research projects and the creation of exhibitions.

Today, museum workers are increasingly eager to use these sources. This is not only because of their cognitive and visual value but also due to their emotional content - especially appreciated in exhibition pursuits. These materials are perfectly presentable. They are incredibly diverse, colourful, sometimes accompanied by photographs or drawings, which makes them readily "eye-catching". However, the most important issue to be mentioned here is their source value. They present different aspects of the victims' lives; we learn from them who they were before they arrived at the camps, their occupations and places of residence. One thing these artefacts and their owners have in common is their place of discovery. This place, marked by human suffering, gives these materials a real context that makes them both testimonies of the victims' lives and evidence of the crimes committed against them. Looking at pictures or documents, we realise that their owners suddenly disappeared. However, before they left, they led a normal life, worked, learned, celebrated important occasions, and all this is reflected in these documents and images captured in the pictures. They show real people as humans, and not only as victims. By analysing typical camp documents - such as files, personal forms, transport lists or registers - we see large figures, numbers, statistics, and even though we know that behind each number is a human being, it is hard to envisage them. They disappear among other numbers, thus losing their individuality.
Moritz Kral probably with his daughter Gertrud
Gertrud and Kurt with their friends at Creek Canyon, summer of 1941
Gertrud and Kurt with their friends at Creek Canyon, summer of 1941.

Wedding picture of Gertrud and Kurt Felsenburg, Vienna, 1938.
Thanks to personal documents we can tell the story of a man, even if we do not know it from beginning to end. Every detail may be interesting.

One of the most touching and yet fascinating stories, which we managed to recreate from the sources described above, is the fate of the Jewish Kral family from Vienna. Emma Kral (1886-1942) and Moritz Kral (1884-1942) are the parents of Walter (1926–1944) and Gertrud (1912). The family lived in Vienna, at 16 Nordbahnstrasse. During the war, Walter Kral stayed in Amsterdam, while the already married Gertrud left Europe with her husband Kurt Felsenburg, and emigrated to the USA. It was established that Emma and Moritz were deported from Vienna to Włodawa on 27 April 1942, and then murdered in the German extermination camp in Sobibór. Walter Kral was deported from Amsterdam to the Westerbork camp, and from there to the Theresienstadt ghetto, from where he was sent to KL Auschwitz on 29 September 1944. It was there that he was murdered. Gertrud was the only survivor of the entire family who, in 1977, submitted a written account of the fate of her relatives in Yad Vashem, now available on the Internet. The beginning of the stories about Emma, Moritz, Walter and Gertrud Kral were based on documents in the museum collection, among others Walter’s and Gertrud’s school certificates, a greeting card on the occasion of Mother’s Day sent by Walter to Emma Kral and numerous photos of Gertrud and her husband Kurt, including wedding Photographs, photo portraits taken in Vienna in August 1938, as well as photos from his trip to the USA sent to Emma and Moritz in 1941. It was precisely these documents that inspired the author of the text to carry out in-depth research aimed at obtaining the broadest possible knowledge about the Kral family.
Most of the photographs of the Kral and Felsenburg family members were found in bulk, and nearly all of them were marked on the reverse side with important data, which helped to identify the persons, places and dates particular photographs were taken. They were primarily taken in the late 1930s. The photographs from the trip around the USA were taken in 1941.

Another moving war story, which was recreated on the basis of just a few photographs pasted into a small family album and one document from the post-camp archive, is the story of the Jewish family, the Eichenbronners from Germany. The exact place of discovery of this album is unknown because one of the family members - Walter Eichenbronner - was referred to the Majdanek camp; thus it is possible that the album was confiscated from him during his stay here. However, it cannot be ruled out that the album was taken from his wife, Flora Eichenbronner before she and her daughter Gisela were deported to the ghetto in Belżycy. Similarly, it may have been found on the grounds of the Flugplatz camp in Lublin. It is worth mentioning that the album's canvas cover bears Flora Eichenbronner's name seal, which is why this collection is commonly referred to as "Flora's album".

In one of the pictures, we see a young, elegant man in a hat, holding a girl a few years old by the hand. There are standing in front of a town house grinning. Subsequent pictures depict only a little girl playing near the house. It can be assumed that the man in the picture is Walter Eichenbronner, but who is the little girl? Is her name Flora, as might be suggested by the stamp on the album cover?
The final and unequivocal answer to this question was found in the online book of remembrance of the victims of the persecution of Jews during the period of National Socialism in Germany in the years 1933-1945, published by the Federal Archive. Based on information retrieved from the database of this archive, it was established that Walter Eichenbronner (1902), his wife Flora (1906) and daughter Gisela (1932) lived in Ilmenau, Thuringia, and were deported in May 1942 to the Lublin District. Walter, as a man of prime-age, was chosen during the preliminary selection on the ramp in Lublin to work on the construction of the concentration camp at Majdanek, while Flora and Gisela were sent to the ghetto in Belżyce.

A document issued by the KL Lublin administration in December 1942 proves that Dr Eichenbronner died in the camp. However, we do not know precisely the fates of Flora and Gisela. We certainly know that they were murdered, but for lack of historical sources, we do not know the place and date of their death. It is understood that before the liquidation of the ghetto in Belżyce, which began in late autumn 1942 and finally ended on 8 May 1943, some of its residents fell victim to executions carried out on the spot, while others were deported and murdered in the death camp in Sobibór.

The details regarding the circumstances of the death of the Eichenbronners are unlikely to be reconstructed.

Two kennkarte belonging to Jan Ściuba - father (1902) and Jan Ściuba - son (1925) - are an example of sources from a collection of private documents, through which it was possible to present the fates of the Polish prisoners. Both documents were found at Majdanek, although the owners of kennkarte were not prisoners of the camp. So, where did they come from? Subject to a letter requesting information about people imprisoned in KL Lublin, sent to the Museum in the 1980s, it was established that Jan Ściuba (born 1902), an office clerk, and his sons Jan (born 1925) and Wiesław (born 1927) were arrested in Biława Podlaska at the end of October and the beginning of November 1943. The reasons for detention were their affiliation to the Home Army and underground activities. Presumably, at the beginning of January 1944, they were transported to the prison at the Lublin Castle and then shot on the premises of the concentration camp at Majdanek. According to the documentation of the Lublin branch of the Polish Red Cross, Jan (it is unknown whether the father or son) and Wiesław received parcels from their families in prison through the Polish Red Cross. Their data are also included in the files of the Central Underground Care - OPUS in the list of those who died in the period of underground fights. It is written next to their names that the wife and mother receive aid after the death of their sons and husbands. However, there is no certainty as to the circumstances surrounding the death of these men.

Kennkarte of Jan Ściuba, the father.
Jan Ściuba, the son
The three family stories mentioned above, reconstructed mainly on the basis of personal documents, gives one an idea of the potential of these materials. Although we do not obtain all the information directly from them, the data contained therein may be an excellent prelude to determining the fate of their murdered owners.

In addition to private documents, the archival resources of the Museum also include the already mentioned photographs. A total of 795 photos were found. Some of them were placed in 10 albums, while the rest were in bulk. The compilation of these materials is very difficult, as a relatively small number of photographs bear annotations made by their authors or owners. On the reverse side of the photographs you can find dedications with the names of donors and recipients, as well as information about where and when the photo was taken. The photos are described in Polish, German, Czech, Slovak, French and Italian. The same applies to documents, most of which are in Polish and German, but also in Russian, French, Italian, Greek, Spanish and Dutch.

Until recently, an additional difficulty was the fact that 328 photos found in bulk were glued into a joint album. It was done by the first employees of the Museum, who probably wanted to protect the photos against loss and destruction. However, a weird creation resulted, which, as it turned out in later years, was the cause of misunderstandings and made it difficult to organise the whole collection, including photographs initially belonging to other collections, as well as some from original family albums.

It was impossible to remove the photos from the album because they were fixed to the album cards with a powerful adhesive. For many years a discussion has been ongoing about the possibility of separating the prints and restoring them to the initially created collections. Professional conservation was necessary, during which the photographs extracted from the album would be strengthened and made more flexible, and then placed in albums for archiving photographic materials as separate objects. However, the implementation of this idea was neither simple nor cheap, and few people were willing to carry out such conservation work. It was not until 2017, after the presentation of the album to the Museum's conservation officer and negotiations on how to carry out the conservation, as well as after receiving an initial, acceptable valuation of the service, that the final decision was taken on its implementation. The album will be released to the conservation studio in 2018.

The archivists waited impatiently, but also with uncertainty, for the results. They hoped to find as many clues and information as possible on the reverse of the photographs. However, the messages received from the conservator did not always instil optimism. The analysis of the glue and substrate revealed the application of casein glue, which is exceptionally durable. Any attempt to separate the photos could end in a fiasco and expose them to damage. The chances of salvaging any annotations on the reverse sides also diminished. In the conservation documentation, we read: “All photographs adhere firmly to the base of the album cards. In addition, they were glued very tightly on both sides of the cards, sometimes overlapping one another. As a result, damages were caused, such as bends or adhesive marks on the emulsion layer. The cards are dirty and dusty. The majority of the photographs are destroyed, dirty, discoloured and have many corrosive damages. The paper substrate and the emulsion layer are very weak, which is proof of microbiological activity.”

The developed conservation plan envisaged "the removal of individual photographs from album cards (de-lamination of cards), mechanical cleaning of photographs, glueing of cracks and tears, colour integration of objects/detailing".

As scheduled, after a few months the photos returned to the museum collections in good condition. So, what follows next? The principles of archival work with such materials require that they are reintroduced to the original collections. And that is what happened.
Unidentify couple in the picture made atelier of Carl Pietzner in Vienna
Unidentify couple in the picture made at atelier of Carl Pietzner in Vienna
At this point, the author of this article will digress and return for a moment to the previously described history of the Kral family from Vienna. Well, it turned out that among the photographs placed in the collective album included photographs depicting Emma and Moritz Kral as well as Moritz with an infant (Gertrud Kral?). The costumes and hairstyles of the portrayed people, as well as the photographic technique used (distinctive retouch, contrasts, rigid cardboard base), suggest that the photographs were taken at the beginning of the XX century. The identification of the couple in the photograph was possible thanks to hand-written information on the reverse side. The discovery of "new photos" was not a big surprise for the employees of the PMM archive, but in this particular case, it was a delightful surprise. The collection related to the Kral family has been “enriched” with new photographs.

The remaining bulk of photographs without annotation have been combined into thematic collections, e.g. portraits of women, couples, children's photographs, group photographs. It is also worth adding a few more words about the state of preservation of the photographs in question. Most of them are in good condition. The photographs are clear, legible and, above all, preserved in their entirety. Paradoxically, photographs from the beginning of the XX century are the best preserved. It may be a result of the high quality of services provided at that time. A few photographs are accompanied by certificates of renowned photographic studios, mainly in Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland, such as Carl Pirtzner – Kaiserlicher und Königlicher Hofphotograph, Vienna; Alfred Hoffmann – Brüx, Bahnhofstraße 442. Kunstanstalt für Photographie und Malerei; M. Laurisch – Kunstanstalt für Photographie und Malerei. Atelier und Gärten, Wien II, Untere Augartenstr. 9; Edward Morawetz - Nowy Targ - “Janina” Photo Shop and Studio, Cracow, Starowiślna 21, Branch of Rabka-Zdrój, Foto N. Mazelman, Nalewki 10 (Warsaw).

Since photography was not very common at that time and somewhat reserved for the affluent, one may assume that the people in the photograph were quite successful. It is evidenced by the places and idyllic atmosphere captured on the prints, among others: exotic beaches, mountain and seaside resorts, promenades of well-known holiday resorts, such as Oak Creek Canyon, Split, Venice, Paris, Amsterdam, Zakopane, Cracow, Rabka Zdroj, Rytro.

In conclusion, both briefly discussed groups of sources stand out against the entire archival resources of the Museum at Majdanek. Firstly, they were created in different places and at different times, and had many creators. Secondly, they are incredibly diverse in form and content. And finally, they do not refer directly to any of the death camps mentioned in the text. The only thing these artefacts have in common is their place of discovery and the sombre reflection that ensues after viewing them, that no one is safe in the face of war, regardless of their wealth status and social position. These historical testimonies compel us to think.
Speaking Memories began as workshops arranged by Jewish culture in Sweden – together with the European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden (Paideia), the Swedish History Museum and the Association of Holocaust Survivors in Sweden, for the purpose of bringing together students Paideia and Holocaust survivors. The project also included open-for- the public seminars and commissioning from photographer Karl Gabor the portraits of the survivors.

Jewish Culture in Sweden and the Swedish History Museum were looking for paths by which a long-term project could be implemented at the museum, enabling access to archive material and to the survivors’ testimonies. The topic that we have been dealing with throughout the years has been how to meet the challenges of preserving and forwarding the memory of the Shoah when the survivors are no longer with us, when the survivors are not here to tell, when they no longer meet pupils in schools, when they no longer write books. That gave birth to the idea of arranging an exhibition which core is archive material, interviews and artefacts.

It was important for Jewish Culture in Sweden and to the Swedish History Museum to form partnership with international institutions who carry out just this type of work, whose mission is to document, commemorate and teach. For that purpose, we connected with the USC Shoah Foundation which archive includes more than 55 000 testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust and other atrocities, and who developed the installation Dimensions in Testimony where visitors could interact with a survivor. Another important cooperation was formed with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum from which we were able to borrow artefacts for the exhibition. All that, presented for the first time in Sweden, makes Speaking Memories a truly unique exhibition with a distinct educational purpose. It is the first time that a State Museum in Sweden produces and presents an exhibition on the Holocaust.

Much has happened since my childhood in Tel Aviv and the silence that engulfed us about the Shoah. It was here in Sweden that I was getting to know the survivors, many of whom added brilliance and meaning to my life. Speaking Memories is about strength, about people who came out of the ashes, who left behind murdered families and a whole world that collapsed. Despite that they rebuilt their lives, got an education, built families, became an active part and contributed to the building of society, with much creativity and dignity. Not everyone made it. For some victims the burden of the nightmare of the Holocaust was too difficult to carry, but of the survivors who are here with us, not once have I heard words of hatred or revenge. They have been too busy writing books and telling their stories at schools for the purpose of teaching the younger generation knowing that this is the only way to create a better world and combat history from repeating itself.
A blouse of Polish political prisoner of Auschwitz Jan Godek (camp np. 449) from the Auschwitz Memorial Collections.
Nothing can replace a personal meeting with a survivor. Nothing will be able to replace a direct interaction with survivors, their voices, eyes, body language. But there is crucial, meticulous, dedicated work that has been carried on throughout the years to document and preserve and make available testimonies and artefacts for future generations.

We wish to express our deep gratitude to Ulrika & Joel Citron, Elisabeth Citrom, Annika & Gabriel Urwitz, Ide and David Dangoor who made the exhibition possible and to the genuine engagement and dedicated of the Swedish History Museum and our partners USC Shoah Foundation and Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

The Holocaust - the systematic and industrial extermination of Europe’s Jews lead by an ‘enlightened' European county – is unique. But it is also universal as lessons can be drawn from that darkest period directly to our time. The Holocaust is not only a Jewish concern, it is and should be a universal concern. Preserving the memory of the Shoah should be a universal concern, and a permanent exhibition or a Holocaust museum in Sweden should be a Swedish concern. We hope that the exhibition Speaking Memories – the Last Witnesses of the Holocaust is a tiny step in this direction.

Lizzie Oved Scheja
Director
Jewish Culture in Sweden and Speaking Memories
From 11 March to 11 August 2019, the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo will once again present the exhibition “Concealed category. Prisoners with a pink triangle in KL Stutthof”. It is the first monographic exhibition in Poland devoted to men classified in the concentration camp near Gdańsk as homosexual prisoners. The exposition presents the social and legal aspects of the fight against homosexuality under the Nazi government in Germany and outlines the fate of several victims - showing how complicated are the attempts to "decipher" prisoners' categories. The Consul General of Germany in Gdańsk, Cornelia Pieper assumed honorary patronage over the exhibition.

Fritz Rattay was an actor. He performed on many German stages, including the Landestheater in Olsztyn and the Stadttheater in Wrocław. Fritz Pehwe ran a flourishing tailor shop in one of the East Prussian towns. Willy Schön, also from East Prussia, was a dairy farmer. All three men were prosecuted in the 1930s for an offence under section 175 of the Penal Code, which from 1871 defined the term “sexuality contrary to nature” in German law. The paragraph, which was toughened in 1935, provided for a sentence of up to ten years of severe incarceration for sexual intercourse between men. Fritz Rattay and Fritz Pehwe served their sentences at the prison in Barczewo (in German: Wartenburg), whereas Willy Schön was sent to the prison in Ryn (in German: Rhein). They were only released after the war. Upon serving their sentences, they were placed under police preventive arrest (subject to directives from outside the judicial jurisdiction) and incarcerated in the Stutthof concentration camp (1939-1945). At the Stutthof camp, they received pink triangles reserved for homosexual prisoners.

The figures of Fritz Rattay, Fritz Pehwe and Willy Schön (and the stories of several other men with a pink triangle) are the central narrative axis of the exhibition “Concealed category”. The exhibition, which was presented for the first time at the Stutthof Museum from 6 September to 12 October 2018, is of a historical and biographical character. The modules of the problem find their continuity in strictly narrative modules, exemplifying the discussed themes and topics. One of them is the categorisation of prisoners used in concentration camps, which combined with the incomplete source database prompts one to treat statistical calculations with great caution and, above all, to ask a number of questions: To what extent has a homosexual crime affected the categorisation of prisoners? Did the “homosexuell” category always refer to the sentence specified in paragraph 175? How and what role in assigning categories was the result of lawlessness or errors of administrative staff? Did a prisoner with a pink triangle have to be a homosexual? Were there men among prisoners of other categories convicted of “sexuality contrary to nature”? Thus, the exhibition proceeds into a discussion with the existing stereotypes and myths that have developed over the years around the "pink triangles".
Przemilczana KATEGORIA
Prisoners with a pink triangle in Stutthof CC

Wystawa pod honorowym patronatem
Konsul Generalnej Republiki Federalnej Niemiec
w Gdańsku Cornelia Pieper

The exhibition is held under the honorary patronage
of German Consul General in Gdańsk Cornelia Pieper

Stutthof Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie
Niemiecki Nazistowski Obóz Koncentracyjny i Zagłady (1939-1945)
Half-truths, concealment and insinuations were the result of both homosexuality itself as a taboo and its criminalisation in post-war Germany. Many years of silence on homosexual prisoners of concentration camps served as an inspiration for both the title of the exhibition and a series of large-format stylized photographs depicting its heroes. They constitute a part of biographical modules. The figures of anonymous prisoners seem to emerge from the shadows, and the faces of some men "reveal themselves" - thanks to the reading of their stories (which are not always explicit) by visitors. It leads to a "meeting" in the place marked by their suffering; to a confrontation of previous conceptions about a relatively unknown group of prisoners and one’s attitude towards homosexuality. The title photograph of two men emerging from the dark is of particular interpretative potential.

The historical and biographical modules are complemented by display cabinets presenting copies of original documents from the collections of the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo, such as prisoners' cards, transport lists, pages from the registers, death certificates, letters from relatives to KL Stutthof commanders, and police documents. Research for the exhibition also covered several foreign archives (among others Bad Arolsen, Berlin, Ebensee, Flossenbürg, Guben, Kaiserslautern, Münster, Neuengamme, Nuremberg, Saarburg, Spira, Schleswig, Washington, Wolfenbüttel). An inestimable support was also provided by the families of former prisoners: Gisela Keitz, Matthias S., Günter Schön, Therese Schön and Dieter Schröder. Their memories and photographs from their family collections contributed to filling the gaps in the biographies of all three men.

The temporary exhibition “Concealed category. Prisoners with pink triangles in KL Stutthof” is part of a research project aimed at presenting the statistics and specificity of the prisoners' community of the German concentration camp Stutthof. The current view of the German prisoners of this camp is not free from simplifications and marked judgments. It does not explain who these prisoners really were and how they ended up in the concentration camp near Gdansk. The exhibition "Concealed Category" shows that the image of prisoners "forgotten" by the Polish and German historiography can be extremely interesting and multifaceted, and tackling the subject allows us to uncover both the past and the present.


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Sara J. Bloomfield, the director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, has been awarded the highest recognition of the Auschwitz Memorial - the Light of Remembrance. The award was presented to her in Washington D.C. by the Director of the Auschwitz Museum, Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński. Polish Ambassador to the United States Piotr Wilczek attended the ceremony.

'Sara Bloomfield has been running the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for twenty years. Her influence on the development of this institution is, therefore, enormous - both in terms of the development of infrastructure as well as all new publications, presentations of excellent monograph temporary exhibitions, the creation of thousands of larger and smaller events, conferences, meetings, and commemorations,' said Piotr Cywiński.

'Behind all this stands a serious, courageous educational concept, directed not only towards young Americans. It is an attempt to face not only the legacy of the Holocaust but also much broader activities concerning many manifestations of genocide all over the world,' emphasized Piotr Cywiński.

'The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is at the forefront of the Holocaust memory movement, and the work of the Holocaust Museum would not be possible without our ongoing partnership with our many dedicated colleagues at the Auschwitz Museum. This award is very meaningful to us and is a fitting tribute to the very impressive professionals who work at both institutions,' said Sara Bloomfield.

Ms. Bloomfield has played a role in several international negotiations. In 2007, the Museum’s diplomatic efforts led to the opening of the largest closed Holocaust archive in the world, the International Tracing Service Archive in Bad Arolsen, Germany, which holds over 30 million pages of records on 17 million victims of Nazism. For the Museum’s 10th Anniversary, she obtained the first-ever loan of Anne Frank’s original writings, including parts of her diary. During the Balkan wars of the 1990s, working with U.S. diplomats, Croatian and Serbian officials, and representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church in America, she negotiated an understanding to rescue endangered artifacts and archives that document the Holocaust in Croatia.
Ms. Bloomfield is a member of the International Auschwitz Council and has been a member of the board of the International Council of Museums/USA (ICOM/USA). She has been an advisor to museums around the world that address difficult history. In 2010, she received the Officers Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland from the President of Poland, Lech Kaczynski.

The USHMM teaches the history and lessons of the Holocaust to audiences worldwide and inspires leaders and citizens to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity. A public-private partnership, the Museum has welcomed over 43 million visitors since it opened in 1993, including 100 heads of state. It reaches millions more every year through its outreach programs, traveling exhibitions, and multi-lingual web site, ushmm.org.

"Light of Remembrance", the award of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, is awarded to those who have made the most meritorious contributions to education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. Professor Władysław Bartoszewski, Krystyna Oleksy, Avner Shalev, and Serge Klarsfeld have been honored with this award so far.
The violations of medical ethics during the Second World War, with special focus on the behaviour of physicians and other medical professionals in Nazi medical institutions and concentration camps, will be the main topic of the 2nd international conference "Medical Review – Auschwitz: Medicine Behind the Barbed Wire". It will take place in Cracow on 7-8 May 2019.

Presentations delivered during the conference will concern such topics, as: "Motivations of Nazi doctors and whether these motivations have modern day relevance", "Medicine and morality under the Nazis", "Teaching medical students about the history of doctors' involvement in the Holocaust: opportunities and challenges", "The case of German SS doctor Johann Paul Kremer" or "Long-term psychosomatic impact in Holocaust offspring".

The program, registration information and other details about the conference are available here.

Conference participants will also have the opportunity to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial.

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