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**Over One Million Followers of the Auschwitz Memorial on Social Media**
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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All editions: memoria.auschwitz.org
The Polish town of Oświęcim, once the home of a thriving Jewish community, honored their memory on Thursday in a special inauguration ceremony during which the site which once hosted the Great Synagogue was officially declared as the Great Synagogue Memorial Park.

The house of prayer was destroyed during the Nazi occupation of Poland during the Second World War by the invading German army.

While the Auschwitz death camp, a stone throw away from the town, is one of the best known historical sites associated with the Holocaust and receives many Israeli visitors, including official IDF and state delegations, few are aware of pre-war Jewish life in Oświęcim.

More than one half the town’s population were Jewish. This fact led to a unique political arrangement which was that before the war, the position of vice-mayor was held by a Jewish-Polish person and that of the mayor by a Catholic Pole.
Max Eisen was only 15 when he and his family were taken from their Hungarian home to the infamous Auschwitz Concentration Camp during the Second World War. All of his relatives were killed; only Max survived to see VE Day and eventual liberation. 74 years on from being liberated, he talks about the unspeakable horrors he saw first hand.

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The Dutch government has allocated $2.76 million toward the maintenance and restoration of Jewish cemeteries in the Netherlands. Local Jews have trouble maintaining the graves because the community’s numbers never recovered after the Holocaust.

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To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Bergen-Belsen liberation by British troops, The Holocaust Education Trust has launched a new educational programme that includes a visit to the site.

belsen75.org.uk

"Champion" - a new movie directed by Maciej Barczewski - will tell the story of Tadeusz Pietrzykowski (played by Piotr Glowacki), an outstanding Polish boxer, prisoner of the Auschwitz camp no. 77. Premiere: Fall 2020

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On January 27, 2020, we will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp.

Although the anniversary will be symbolically commemorated in different places in the world, the main event will take place at the authentic Memorial Site. The voice of Survivors and their message for the contemporary world will sound from this place, from the gate of the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau.
The schedule of anniversary events:

• welcome address by the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda
• MAIN ADDRESSES - Auschwitz Survivors
• address of a representative of the "Pillars of Remembrance"
• word of thanks by the director of the Memorial Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński
• ecumenical prayers

Then, a delegation of Survivors, accompanied by heads of state delegations, will walk towards the monument located between the ruins of gas chambers and crematoria II and III. Candles will commemorate all victims of the Auschwitz camp.

Auschwitz Survivors will be the most important guests of the event commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. We expect that on January 27, 2020, about 200 of them will come to the Memorial from all over the world. A delegation of approximately 120 Auschwitz and Holocaust Survivors from the United States, Canada, Israel, Australia, and several European countries will be able to take part in the main commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz thanks to the support of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation from New York City under the Leadership of Ronald S. Lauder. More and more former prisoners from Poland are now confirming their presence.

"Most of the knowledge of post-war generations about Auschwitz came from Survivors' testimonies. It was also them who established the Auschwitz Memorial after the war and wrote down the history that became the foundation of our memory and remembrance. On January 27, 2020, 75 years after Auschwitz, a large group of Survivors - thanks to Ronald Lauder and other donors - will commemorate the anniversary of liberation with us. January 27 is the most important date for this place: its importance is shared by all former prisoners, both from Poland and from around the world," said Dr.
for this place: its importance is shared by all
former prisoners, both from Poland and from
around the world," said Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński,
the director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial
and Museum.

'We have sent the invitations to all former
prisoners with whom we remain in contact. But
obviously, we will take care of everybody who
expresses their willingness to participate. We
have prepared accommodation and the entire
logistics of such an undertaking. Each of the
witnesses of history will be accompanied by one
person. If there is somebody who wishes to
participate, please contact the organization
team,' said Bartosz Bartyzel, Museum
Spokesman.

On January 27, the witnesses of history are
going to sit in the tent installed over the
historical gate of former Auschwitz II-Birkenau
camp. Official delegations from several dozen
countries from all over the world are going to
listen to their words, together with the
representatives of international institutions,
social organizations, clergymen, the staff of
museums and memorial sites devoted to this
topic.

King and Queen of the Netherlands, King of
Spain, presidents of Germany, Israel, Poland and
Switzerland and prime minister of Greece are
the first confirmed heads of state delegations
who will take part in the commemoration of the
75th anniversary on January 27, 2020.

'This anniversary, this memory, this symbol of
the liberation of Auschwitz, shows one of the
essential foundations of the post-war life in
Europe and the world. That is why I am not
surprised that so many decision-makers
understand perfectly well that it is difficult to be
anywhere else on this particular day. It is clear
that on the 75th anniversary, we all want to
stand together with Auschwitz Survivors live
among us,' said Piotr M. A. Cywiński.

'We are expecting in total several dozen
degations as well as the representatives of
international institutions. Many of them will be
represented at the highest level, including some
that we can already confirm officially. Talks with
subsequent embassies are in progress; in some
cases, we are waiting for official declarations, so
we will be completing the list of confirmations
on an ongoing basis,' added Bartosz Bartyzel.

The first confirmed heads of state delegations:

The Netherlands - His Majesty King Willem-
Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Máxima, Prime
Minister Mark Rutte
Spain - HM Philip VI of Spain
Sweden - HRH Crown Princess Victoria, Prime
Minister Stefan Löfven, Speaker of the
Parliament Andreas Norlén
Finnland – President Sauli Niinistö
Germany – President Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Israel – President Reuven Rivlin Malta – President
George William Vella
Poland – President Andrzej Duda
Switzerland - Presidency of the Swiss
Confederation

Greece – Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis
Estonia – Minister of Population Riina Solman

The Polish television (TVP) will be the producer
of the official TV broadcasting signal during the
75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz
on 27 January 2020. The free TV signal available
in satellite transmissions will be available to TV
stations around the world. Streaming of the
anniversary events with simultaneous translation
into Polish and English will also be available in
HD quality at www.auschwitz.org, on YouTube
and social media sites of the Auschwitz
Memorial.

The media accreditation process for the 75th
anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz will
take place from 6-19 January. Different pools
will be created for agency photographers, who
will be present in the main tent of the
anniversary event, as well as for camera
operators and photojournalists who will observe
the laying of candles by former prisoners and
official delegations at the monument in the
former Birkenau camp.

Very positive signals concerning the organization
of common viewing of the anniversary have
already reached us from some institutions and
organizations.
The New York Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is in the course of preparing the event of this kind. Currently this institution hosts the exhibition “Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away”.

"Our museum is deeply honored to partner with the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation on the 75th commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz by serving as the venue for Holocaust survivors and their families in the New York area to gather together to view this historic event via livestream," said Jack Kliger, Museum President & CEO.

"In a world of rising intolerance, antisemitism, and Holocaust denial, it is crucial for the world to come together to remember and to educate younger generations," said Kliger.

“It is an extremely precious initiative, in particular in the context of our ongoing cooperation connected with the exhibition about Auschwitz presented by the New York Museum”, said Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, Director of the Auschwitz Memorial.

“We are getting similar requests from other places as well. So, I would like to encourage everybody to organize such events on January 27, but even more to make sure that survivors residing in the neighbourhood are invited to them, as they are often unable – for example due to their health condition – to come to the Auschwitz Memorial. Prepare special invitations for them, do everything that is possible to help them come to your institution and back home safe, in order for them to follow commemorative events together with their local community, surrounded by their near and dear ones and friends”, Piotr Cywiński called.

Each institution or organization which is going to prepare an event of this kind can contact us by e-mail at press[at]Auschwitz.org and provide their name, location and contact details. We will publish this information on the 75.auschwitz.org website in order to help survivors find and reach the nearest place where the broadcast will be organized.

The year 2020 will be special due to two anniversaries related to the memory: The 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration, under which the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research was established, today the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance; and the 15th anniversary of the adoption of 27 January as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the United Nations General Assembly. Both events symbolically took place on 27 January, on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Consequently, the major international commemoration event will be organized at the Auschwitz Memorial.

The President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, has assumed honorary patronage over the the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz. Further information on this event will be published on the website: 75.auschwitz.org.
ABOUT THE HISTORY OF POST-CAMP SITES AND THE FUTURE OF MARTYRDOM MUSEUMS

On October 7-9, 2019, a nationwide scientific conference titled "History in Memorial Spaces. The Camp - site - museum", was held in Lublin. It was organised by the State Museum at Majdanek.

The event was the focal point of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the institution - the oldest martyrdom museum in Europe, located on the grounds of the former German concentration camp. The conference was addressed not only to museum employees but also to academic researchers and representatives of various scientific disciplines.

The ideological assumptions of the conference emphasised that the material and ontological aspects of martyrdom museums situated in historical sites on the grounds of World War II camps are a combination of three distinct and mutually overlapping entities, namely, "The camp - site - museum". The conceptual triad used in the conference title seems to be crucial for the debate on the specificity of martyrdom museums, their narratives, effect and perception, in other words, how the past is presented in such institutions.

The "Camp" is, above all, the history of crime, fates of prisoners, their persecution and extermination. It is also the material remains of buildings and better or worse preserved historical traces. The relics, which are fragments of camps, also belong to a place, that is, a "post-camp site" that has its own history, and which is today a cultural palimpsest with several layers of memory. As the example of the Museum at Majdanek, which has a large number of historical buildings, shows, it may seem that the camp and the site are one and the same. It is however different, as illustrated by the memorial site in Sobibór, where the camp buildings did not survive (they were destroyed or demolished), but still remains the site of the former German death camp, i.e. the site of the aftermath, first transformed by the perpetrators of genocide, then by nature and various post-war activities (construction of a monument) or lack thereof. Furthermore, there is the "museum" form, which in addition to its role as a medium in the triad, also serves as an institutional superstructure. Often, only a part of the camp and the site are components of the camp, which are more or less subject to musealisation processes.
Many important topics were discussed during the conference. On the first day, the speakers discussed, among other things, the fate of various groups of prisoners. They also presented the legacy of the files and examined scientific literature on the camps. Marta Grudzińska in her speech entitled "Polish prisoners in KL Lublin in the light of the latest research", presented the fate of the second largest group of Majdanek prisoners and the latest calculations on the number of lives lost. Her study is part of a publication currently being edited by Tomasz Kranz and Wojciech Lenarczyk entitled “Prisoners of KL Lublin. Historical studies”, devoted to various nationalities and victims of the camp. Piotr Setkiewicz presented a paper on Auschwitz 1942, stressing that the establishment of the extermination centre in this camp, contrary to general belief, was not the result of a plan adopted and consistently implemented in advance, but rather the result of a series of repeatedly changing decisions in the context of plans to create an SS industrial centre around the camp and to provide workforce - initially Polish political prisoners, Soviet prisoners of war, and finally able-bodied Jews, selected from among those deported for extermination as part of the so-called “final solution to the Jewish question”.

Piotr Chruścielski in his speech, Not present. On the prisoners of KL Stutthof, about whom we remain silent, presented the current state of research on marginalised groups of prisoners (including common criminals, the so-called antisocial units, homosexuals, people "defaming" the Aryan race, or sailors from the Kriegsmarine penal unit on the Hel Peninsula), while discussing the reasons for the many years of silence on the topic. Marta Zawodna-Stephan in her paper, Necrocommunitas. Concentration camps in the transitional phase, raised issues related to the difficult situation in the so-called non-evacuated camps in April and May 1945 (e.g. Bergen Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau), described in the accounts of witnesses as a time of chaos (disintegration of the social structure created during the functioning of the camps, overpopulation, high mortality). The introduced necrocommunitas category also indicates that, in addition to exhausted prisoners, participants in the camp world also included dead bodies.

Wojciech Lenarczyk in his subsequent speech, On the legacy of the files of Nazi concentration camps in the context of the edition of the “Majdanek in documents” presented the assumptions of the research project implemented in the State Museum at Majdanek and the resulting volume of Majdanek in documents. The publication is a comprehensive and first source edition devoted to camp issues. The speaker also discussed the condition of the preserved legacy of KL Lublin and its consequences for the research on the history of the camp. The presentation highlighted the fundamental importance of historical sources, including materials from the camp authorities' office, and the need to make them widely available for scientific and educational purposes in martyrdom museums.

The post-war fate of the documentation of the Stutthof concentration camp is a lecture by Agnieszka Kłys, in which she not only discussed the set of documents of the former KL Stutthof as an important source of information about the functioning of the camp and prisoners, but also its interesting, post-war history. The documents of the camp office in January 1945 were transferred during the evacuation march; only for them to be returned to Poland after more than 20 years. In another paper entitled The Spatiality of a Concentration Camp, Łukasz Postuszy - based on the biographical materials of former prisoners, maps, plans, and photographs - conducted a spatial analysis of this execution site as a total institution. On the example of the German concentration camp at Majdanek he shows the camp as a territory of violence and crime in the material perspective (panoptic model of supervision, barbed wire), functional and semiotic (horizontally and vertically).

On the other hand, Jerzy Halberstadt in his speech "Determining the Holocaust space in Poland against the background of practices in other countries" dealt with the analysis of the process of creating spaces commemorating the Holocaust on the example of several memorial sites in Poland, and comparing them with similar projects in Germany, Austria, France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, among others.
In the paper On the History of KL Plaszow in Scientific Literature and Press publications (1945-2007), based on historical, popular-scientific works, guides to commemorated places of martyrdom and local press, its author Katarzyna Kocik critically analyses the post-war message on the functioning of this German concentration camp, which often contains untrue, distorted information. Such point of view also allows us to trace the evolution of the way of thinking about the Holocaust from a local perspective.

In the paper, Before the establishment of the museum. Commemoration history of the extermination site in Bełżec, Tomasz Hanejko outlined the post-war history of the former German extermination camp in Bełżec, stressing that for a long time it was forgotten, subjected to devastation and attempts to erase traces and memory. It was not until 1963 that the first monument was erected to commemorate the victims. The memorial plaques, however, contained informational errors and did not mention that the vast majority of those murdered were Polish Jews. The new monument, unveiled in June 2004, in contrast to the previous one, covered the entire area of the former camp, especially the area where the remains of the victims are still buried. It is an interesting form of expressing the experience of the Holocaust and symbolically refers to the topography of the camp, its functions as well as Jewish tradition and religion. The first day of the conference ended with a lecture by Marcin Michniowski titled “the 40th anniversary of the Museum of Martyrdom Under the Clock, in which he discussed the history and exhibition activities, publishing, education and commemoration of this important memorial site in Lublin, which was established in 1979 in the former Gestapo detention centre.

The next day of the conference was devoted mainly to newly created museums in authentic sites of historical events as well as to commemorative practices and scientific challenges. In the paper, From a Crime Site to a Memorial Site. The main assumptions of the museum exhibition organised on the grounds of the German extermination camp in Sobibór, its author Tomasz Kranz, stressed that the exhibition will be inscribed in the context
of an authentic crime site, where many material traces have survived, such as the railway ramp, the road to the gas chambers, the location of the building with mass extermination equipment and the grave with the ashes of the victims. Accordingly, the museum's narrative is to be based on the reception of identified material remains and the existing landscape. The new exhibition is designed as a place documenting the history of the camp as well as a space for reflection and mourning, and its central point will house numerous memorabilia of the murdered found during archaeological works. Marta Śmietana and Monika Bednarek in the paper KL Plaszow Museum and Memorial: the assumptions of the commemoration scenario, discussed the post-war fate of the grounds of the former German concentration camp, attempts to restore memory and the concept of a comprehensive commemoration and establishment of the KL Plaszow Museum and Memorial as a branch of the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow.

On the other hand, the speech by Wojciech Śleszyński Sybir Memorial Museum. The Site-narrative-museum concerned the objectives of the created museum exhibition. According to the author, the exhibition aims to present the history of specific people and their accompanying experiences through selected exhibits. The goal of the museum is not only to preserve, but also to pass on to future generations the memory of the experiences of Siberia as a symbol of the Tsarist and Stalinist repressions, and to familiarise them with the history of the former eastern lands of the Second Republic of Poland.

Marcin Owsiński, in his paper Politics and Memory. The unveiling ceremony of the Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom at the former KL Stutthof camp on 12 May 1968, analysed the preparation process of the unveiling ceremony and the intentions of the organisers, stressing that on the one hand they were a manifestation of the revived regional memory (attended by several thousand former prisoners of the camp), and on the other hand they had a very clear political and propaganda aspect, because they were held in the shadow of the events of March 1968 and the international situation that prevailed at that time.
Bartłomiej Grzanka's paper, Restoring memory. The role of the Kulmhof Museum at the former German extermination camp in Chelmno on the River Ner, in commemorating the site of the tragedy and victims shows the post-war process of marginalisation and depreciation of the post-camp space. The recovery of the memory of the Holocaust began with the creation of the Kulmhof Museum at the former German extermination camp in Chelmno nad Nerem in 1987, which, through scientific research, new forms of commemoration and educational activities, bestows the place with proper identity, including a spatial dimension. The presentation titled Visual Strategies of Memory. Photographs as a form of narration in museums on the grounds of concentration and extermination camps by Agata Jankowska referred to the role and strategy of using camp photographs in historical exhibitions. The author stated that the museum changes the original meaning of the photographs, gives them new, humanising meanings and that the photographs create a specific imaginarium about the Holocaust and concentration/death camps. Piotr Stanek in his speech Scientific experiences and challenges from the perspective of half a century. The case of the Central Museum of Prisoners of War emphasised the need and importance of scientific activities by martyrdom museums. He also referred to how the museum solves the basic problem of creating a source base and how the main directions of research have changed, as a result of the extensive area of research.

An important point and a summary of the second day of the conference was the first panel debate organised at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, entitled What is a post-camp site? Meanings, functions, contexts, with the participation of Roma Sendyka, Robert Traba and Anna Ziemińska-Witek, led by Andrzej Stępnik. The discussion centred on understanding important research categories such as "a post-camp site", "authenticity", "aesthetics", and their interpretation in the context of the process of commemoration and musealisation of the grounds of former German concentration and extermination camps, as well as the question of who the stakeholders in martyrdom museums are, and what are the prospects for their development. As stated, the "post-camp site" is undoubtedly a complex and ambiguous space that communicates the past and facilitates its understanding, deciphering and interpretation on many levels (intellectual, emotional, material, cultural, aesthetic, tourist, educational).

The third and last day of the meeting was dominated by the analysis of various areas of activity of martyrdom museums. The results of the visitors' surveys at the State Museum at Majdanek and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum were presented, with particular emphasis on the historical knowledge acquired and the impressions of the recipients after visits to these sites. The issues of the role of research in the development of education in memorial sites were also discussed, as well as the psychological aspects of post-camp trauma. Jan Kutnik, in his paper entitled Conditions of reception of the exhibition of the State Museum at Majdanek, presented the preliminary results of his research on what factors play the most significant role in a situation where visitors encounter a representation of the border situation in an authentic memorial site and what helps them to cope better with the narrative on genocide.
Piotr Stanek
Centralne Muzeum Jeńców Wojennych w Łambinowicach

Naukowe doświadczenia i wyzwania z perspektywy półwiecza. Casus Centralnego Muzeum Jeńców Wojennych
The aim of Alicja Bartuś's speech *Perception of Auschwitz and World War II* based on the research of Małopolska students (2016-2018) was to reflect on the direction and effects of education conducted following a visit to the Auschwitz Memorial Site. The author emphasised that the effect of memorial sites is primarily an emotional and visual experience, while effective assimilation of knowledge is determined by many factors (e.g. a good guide, proper preparation for the visit, positive motivation).

Anna Czerner and Elżbieta Nieroba, in the paper *Role of empirical research in the development of education in the memorial site*, discussed qualitative sociological research commissioned by the Central Museum of Prisoners of War in Łambinowice, addressed to the local community. The results of the research project suggest that they may help develop an educational offer that combines attractiveness for the recipient (in a cognitive and emotional sense) concerning the nature of the memorial site, its aura and historical context. Justyna Nowak's speech entitled *Inherit the memory of the concentration camp* was an important contribution to the discussion on post-memory connected with her stay in the concentration camp. The trauma of war does not disappear with the passing away of the generation that experienced it. Research shows that mental mutilation is characteristic of war-time grandchildren or great-grandchildren, with a constant feeling of insecurity and danger. Only after the discovery and full awareness of the ancestors' traumas can we name and channel fears and fantasies unidentified earlier.

The second panel debate entitled, *Between localness and globalness. About the status, potential, opportunities and threats faced by martyrdom museums in Poland* was attended by the following panellists: Paulina Florjanowicz, Wiesław Wysok and Dorota Folga-Januszewska, led by Piotr Tarnowski. Today, martyrdom museums function in a new cultural context, characterised by a visible crisis in traditional school teaching of history, coupled with a growing influence of mass culture on the perception of history and the danger of commercialisation and trivialisation of the Holocaust. The panellists pointed out that memorial museums are distinguished by their great imaginative, educational and mediation potential, whose strength lies in exploring the past through the experience of a real crime site on an emotional, intellectual and reflective level. They also emphasised the indispensable and extremely important role of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in creating an institutional, legal and financial framework for the effective functioning of museums and memorial sites.

In conclusion, it can be argued that martyrdom museums are faced with many challenges in the era of a changing historical culture, technological changes and new expectations on the part of visitors. In this respect, the conference *History in memory spaces. The Camp - site - museum* presented great potential for research, education and commemoration of martyrdom museums, as well as the deficits and the need for further reflection. Thanking all the speakers, panellists and speakers for their substantial contribution to the conference, the organisers expressed hope that the publication planned for 2021 will be an important contribution to the discussion on the condition and development prospects of these museum institutions', which are important for contemporary memory culture.
“PEBBLES FOR PEACE”

Tucked away in small town Ontario, Canada is a project that is striving to make a BIG difference. The students at Goodwin Learning Centre, a small, private elementary school, are collecting 6 million pebbles to commemorate the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Two of the very early pebbles that were received were sent by an anonymous person who shared the story of David and Jackie – “Both young Jews, early 20s, and they were hiding in my apartment with the great help of my landlady.” David and Jackie were found by the Gestapo, arrested and sent first to Kazerne Dossin in Belgium and then “east” to an unknown location. David and Jackie did not survive. Also included in the letter was a Star of David that Jewish victims were forced to wear.

Some pebbles that have been sent have been accompanied by letters that share the pebbles’ personal significance to the individual. Three pebbles were received in one envelope from a small town in Ontario, Canada: a white stone, a dark stone and an oval stone.

The white stone, according to the donor, “...is rare, apparently it says somewhere in the Old Testament that one who finds a white stone finds a wink from God. So here is your wink!” The dark stone appeared to have a face etched on it: “Could this be the face of a Holocaust victim watching over your project in their memory?”

The oval stone felt good in the donor’s hand, like you were holding someone’s hand, and she stated in her letter: “By your project, you have given the citizens of the world another chance to hold hands and walk together.”

This special project began in 2007 with the added goal of collecting pebbles from many different towns, cities and countries from around the world. The response has been overwhelming. Many of the pebbles that have been sent to the school have been accompanied by heartfelt letters that explain the significance of the pebble donation. Oftentimes the pebbles are sent in memory of specific people who lost their lives in the Holocaust.
A photo of a yellow swastika. Handwritten text in French and English is also present, discussing events and emotions.
The Pebbles for Peace project has allowed the students to see the global impact of this project. The simple act of collecting pebbles has moved people from around the world to share such personal, heartfelt stories while sending pebbles to be a part of the collection. Students mark a map in the school each time a pebble from a new city or town arrives.

The students have also come to have a deeper understanding of the cost of hatred and intolerance. As people have opened their hearts in letters that accompany the pebbles, the students have learned more about the lasting impact on families. They have moved beyond the facts and figures to grasp an understanding of the human cost of this history. Through this learning, they have also gained a deeper understanding of the importance of respect, compassion and kindness.

The school’s library of books about the Holocaust continues to grow along with their connection to survivors. Holocaust survivors from Dachau, Auschwitz, and Stutthof (among other camps) have all visited Goodwin Learning Centre to tell their stories and to commend the students on this tremendous project which they have embarked upon.

As the collection of pebbles grows, the students are gaining a better understanding of the enormity of the tragedy. Some of the pebbles have been kept in cases inside the school including pebbles that have been sent from different concentration camps, pebbles from authors, or special guests that have visited the school. The majority of the pebbles are kept in an extension to the current peace garden.

Initial plans are currently underway to design a children’s memorial in the school’s peace garden. The memorial will feature 1.5 million pebbles to honour the Jewish children murdered in the Holocaust. A second stage to the project will follow where the remaining 4.5 million pebbles will be used to also extend the peace garden.

Currently, the collection of pebbles has reached 5,400,000. If you would like to send a pebble to help reach the goal of 6 million you can send to: Pebbles for Peace, 149 English Settlement Road, Trenton, Ontario, K8V5P7, Canada.
FORGOTTEN VICTIMS: THE GENOCIDE OF THE ROMA AND SINTI

The genocide carried out against the Roma and Sinti communities of Europe by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War – the persecution and murder of as many as 500,000 people – has been referred to as ‘the forgotten Holocaust’ by Professor Eve Rosenhaft. After the war, survivors and relatives of victims struggled to gain recognition and compensation for the persecution and losses they had suffered. In Britain and Europe today, prejudice and discrimination against Roma and Sinti remain common.

During the Nazi era (1933-1945), the Roma and Sinti communities were targeted for persecution and murder. The Nazis built on historical prejudices, viewing these communities as ‘anti-social’ and ‘racially inferior’. They enacted discriminatory measures against Roma and Sinti, including confinement in special camps and a massive programme of pseudo racial science investigation.

Many Roma and Sinti were forcibly sterilised. The Second World War saw an escalation in Nazi persecution against the Roma and Sinti. Jews, Roma and Sinti people faced violence, deportations to ghettos and camps and then genocide as the German army invaded Poland (1939), the Low Countries and France (1940), and the Soviet Union (1941). In the Soviet territories, the Nazis and their collaborators massacred thousands of Roma and Sinti in mass shootings.

The genocide also occurred in pro-Nazi states, such as Croatia. From January 1943, all Roma and Sinti from across Europe were deported to the Zigeunerlager (‘Gypsy camp’) at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where it is estimated that 21,000 people were murdered. On 31 July – 2 August 1944, the Nazis liquidated the Zigeunerlager and killed over 4,000 men, women and children.

The Wiener Holocaust Library’s autumn 2019 exhibition, Forgotten Victims: The Genocide of the Roma and Sinti draws upon the Library’s collections to uncover the story of this little known aspect of Nazi persecution. The Library’s archives hold a wide range of relevant materials including eyewitness accounts, photographs, documents and books.

The Wiener Holocaust Library’s exhibition explores Roma and Sinti life in Germany and Austria prior to the Second World War, and the genocidal policies that started in German-occupied Poland in 1940. It also examines the post-war lives and legacies for Roma and Sinti. The exhibition reflects on the situation in Britain and Europe today and explore why the Roma and Sinti communities are still ‘forgotten’ victims of genocide.
All pictures in the article: the Wiener Library. Photograph of a Roma man, thought to be Jozef Kwiek, 'Gypsy King', Belzec, German-occupied Poland, 1940. Romani families in the background.
KURT ANSIN

In 1938 he was taken to Birkenau by the Jewish family trees with their Gypsies. One by one in the Himmler also visited. I questioned him and was good as they were. His name (the one he didn't have) was Kurt. "May"

Kurt was released and died.

Kurt Ansin the head Gypsy was taken into the views that later (in 1942) they had of the Gypsy. On the way to Stettin, the Jews were put on the train and sent to Stettin. I was taken to the Jewish section. I was there for unexplained reasons. In December 1940 I volunteered for unexplained reasons. As a reward for my work I was to be sterilized at Wundorg hospital near Stettin and put in the Jewish section. (My father was a half-Jewish, half-Gypsy). I remained in Sachsenhausen 1940 and was badly treated. I was taken to Stettin before Christmas 1940 under the condition to be sterilized and put in the Jewish section. I had not done this they would have sent me back to a camp. The operation took place in May 1941 on the orders of Dr. Ritter of the hereditary health court in Stettin. In 1941 I was again arrested in September 1942 with my family. My wife and four children and sent as a farmer to Pomerania. I was separated from my wife and four children and sent as a farmer to Sachsenhausen and four brothers and two sisters. I was sent to Sachsenhausen and others to Auschwitz. Of the seven only one sister returned. I was in Sachsenhausen the second time my twelve-year old daughter Martha was taken to hospital and sterilized. The three younger were put on a list for sterilization when they reached twelve years old. I worked in the tailor's shop at Sachsenhausen until the camp was liberated in May 1945.

No. 752 (Imperial War Museum Case 352 Box VIII B)
F.L.I.I.b. (Auschwitz) No. 611

F.I.I.I.b. (Auschwitz-Birkenau) No. 785

Dorf in der Nähe von Schwechat trägt schon den Charakter der Puszta. Hier wohnt Frau Horvath völlig

kurze, braune Stiefel, Skipfoten gebunden. Das Gesicht, das ich sah, dass diese Frau schon merkt, wie viele sich verschliessen sollten, dass wir in zwei Stunden

nachts in einem Sofa und schreibt eifrig ordnen und sie dann
def einen Ausweis, den wir und der Mißtrauens in der解決, dass was in Auschwitz ist ihr heisser Wunsch.


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Forming the backbone of this exhibition are testimonies from victims and survivors. During the 1950s, researchers at The Wiener Library gathered over 1,000 accounts from witnesses to Nazi persecution and genocide, which included a number of testimonies from Roma and Sinti survivors. The Library also has possession of the Kenrick Collection, which contains a wealth of material relating to the persecution of the Roma and Sinti under the Nazis, collected and compiled in 1968.

Both of these collections sought to gather and preserve testimonies from the marginalised Roma and Sinti people soon after the end of the Second World War. The Library is committed to ensuring that the suffering and injustices that these communities suffered are not forgotten. These unique collections are available for users to access digitally in the Library’s Wolfson Reading Room.

The exhibition tells the stories of a number of individuals, including Margarethe Kraus. Margarethe was originally from Czechoslovakia but, along with her family, she was deported to Auschwitz sometime in 1943, when she was just a teenager. Whilst imprisoned in the concentration camp she was forced to endure maltreatment and extreme privations, and she contracted typhus. Margarethe was also subjected to medical experiments in Auschwitz. Her parents did not survive the Holocaust. In this photograph, taken by Reimar Gilsenbach in the 1960s in East Germany, her Auschwitz camp number tattoo is visible on her left forearm.

Other documents on display from the Library’s collections include this translation from the Nuremburg War Crimes trial. In this document, written during the later stages of the war, Heinrich Himmler, Head of the SS, notes that the measures taken within the German Reich against “Poles, Jews and Gypsies” have caused these groups to be presented as equivalent “in the public eye”. Himmler states that “the accomplished evacuation and isolation” of Jews and Gypsies means that directives against them are no longer necessary. “Evacuation” and “isolation” in this context meant that the vast majority of Jews, Sinti and Roma from greater Germany had by this point been deported to ghettos and camps and murdered.

The Wiener Holocaust Library is one of the world’s leading and most extensive archives on the Holocaust and Nazi era. Formed in 1933, the Library’s unique collection of over one million items includes published and unpublished works, press cuttings, photographs and eyewitness testimony. The Library provides a resource to oppose antisemitism and other forms of prejudice and intolerance by being a living memorial to the evils of the past.

Forgotten Victims: The Genocide of the Roma and Sinti will run from the 30th October 2019 until 11th March 2020. Admission is free. Open from Mon-Fri 10.00 – 17.30, Tues 10.00 – 19.30. For more information on The Wiener Library, and where to find them, visit their website.

Margarete Kraus, a Czech Roma, photographed after the war by Reimar Gilsenbach.
OVER ONE MILLION FOLLOWERS OF THE AUSCHWITZ MEMORIAL ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Over a million people from all over the world follow social media profiles of the Auschwitz Memorial Site on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Thanks to sharing the posts published by the Museum, facts from the history of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz reach dozens million people.

Twitter account is followed by 663 thousand users, on Facebook – over 308 thousand and over 77 thousand on Instagram (on 25 November 2019).

The Auschwitz Museum has been developing its presence in social media since 2009. “We started – as the first institution of this kind in the world – with our Facebook page as we noticed that this is where the users search for the information about the history of Auschwitz and they find different – better or worse – pages devoted to the history of the camp. So, we agreed that – as a Memorial Site – we should be present there in order to be accessible, so that people could reach us, ask questions and discover the history. A few years later we launched our accounts on Twitter and Instagram. Now, also as the first institution of this kind in the world, we have reached a million followers”, said Paweł Sawicki, responsible for the Museum social media.

The main aim of the presence of the Auschwitz Museum in social media consists in commemorating the victims and educating about the history of Auschwitz, but each of the sites represents totally different characteristics. “What matters most it is everyday work consisting in reminding of the facts referring to camp history, specific people, victims, stories as well as showing the extremely difficult, complex and multidimensional character of camp history”, Paweł Sawicki emphasizes.

Twitter constitutes the most important channel of communication, through which we not only remind of camp victims, but also contact with the representatives of the media, conduct public dialogue, publish official statements, react to press releases containing substantial errors or undertake necessary steps when the reputation of Auschwitz victims is damaged.

Within the period of two years, the number of followers grew from 50 thousand in September 2017 to 650 thousand in November 2019. In 2018, the list of top ten Polish tweets (biggest number of shares and likes – data: Sotrender) included 6 written by the Auschwitz Museum. In October 2019, Museum’s tweets were viewed nearly 58 million times.
Auschwitz Memorial and Museum
Memorial of the former German Nazi #Auschwitz concentration and extermination camp. Click link to see our online magazine "Memoria".
memoria.auschwitz.org
"The ‘social’ aspect constitutes an extremely important part of this activity. It is thanks to Twitter users – often celebrities or media figures – who have decided to support us, call other people to join our virtual community of memory and follow our account, we have recently managed to first cross the barrier of 200 thousand and then of 500 thousand. We currently hope to reach the symbolical number of 750 thousand followers on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of liberation of Auschwitz. The target seems possible to achieve thanks to extraordinary support and the activity of online community,” Paweł Sawicki emphasized.

Mark Hamill, famous American actor who played Luke Skywalker in the "Star Wars" series, wrote on Twitter: “It may be difficult, but @AuschwitzMuseum is the most important account I've ever followed. I urge everyone to do the same”.

A journalist Dan Rather wrote: “I follow @AuschwitzMuseum and it is unlike anything else on Twitter... a stark, disturbing history that must never be forgotten, and a conscience for our own troubled times. If you don’t follow them I suggest you do.”

Journalists also called to follow the account of the Museum in one of the programs broadcast live on the La7 channel in Italy.

Facebook – due to easy contact possibilities – constitutes an important channel of direct interaction with visitors. “This is the place where we can publish the most complete educational content, as the length of posts is not limited. On Facebook we also broadcast important events taking place at the Memorial Site live”, said Paweł Sawicki.

On January 27, 2020 – both on the website as well as on Facebook – events commemorating the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz are going to be broadcast.

Instagram page represents slightly different function, as it is used on one hand to promote valuable photographs performed at the Memorial Site by visitors, but also to educate, present the authenticity of post-camp space as well as to monitor how the visual memory of Auschwitz looks like.

"With all these virtual tools we are able to shape the memory, as the Memorial Sites tries to care about it not only within the authentic former camp site, but also through media or the Internet”, Paweł Sawicki remarked.
We hope to get 750,000 followers for the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on 27 Jan 2020.

This will not be possible without your support & engagement.

Help us to honor all victims and preserve their memory online. RT & encourage others to follow @AuschwitzMuseum.