EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL FOR THE SITE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE IN ŁAMBINOWICE

BURMA’S PATH TO GENOCIDE. ONLINE EXHIBITION.

"AUSCHWITZ. NOT LONG AGO. NOT FAR AWAY" EXHIBITION WITH THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE AWARD \ EUROPA NOSTRA AWARD

VARIA. ONLINE MAGAZINE OF THE MUSEUM AT MAJDANEK.

CFP. ONLINE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP: SOURCES OF MEMORY AND THE HOLOCAUST.
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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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EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL FOR THE SITE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE IN ŁAMBINOWICE

The Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice and the Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War (CMJW) operating within the site and taking care of its premises have been included on a prestigious list of ten facilities belonging to national heritage distinguished with European Heritage Label 2019. The decision of the European Commission was announced on March 31st this year. The distinction is awarded by independent experts to the sites which played particular role in shaping the history and culture of Europe or developing values constituting the foundation for European integration.

Let us recall what the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice represents. It is the area within the Opole voivodeship formed by post-camp premises as well as war cemeteries, the unique testimony of the escalation of armed conflicts – from the Prussian-French war in the 19th century through the First World War to the apogee of violence and disrespect of human rights during the Second World War, when Stalag Lamsdorf, one of the biggest Wehrmacht camp complexes in Europe, was in operation in the territory. Material evidence of social consequences of armed conflicts (and moving the borders) was also preserved in Łambinowice, connected with the history of camps for migrating civilians: the German camp (1921–1924) and the Polish one (labour camp 1945-1946). We present them according to the order in which they appear on the so called Route of Memory.

Old POWs Cemetery is the oldest one. It was established during the Prussian-French war. It is distinguished by its personalized, marked burial, monuments commemorating POWs of different European nations and its scale – it is one of the biggest, the best preserved cemeteries for POWs in Europe. It keeps the ashes of over 7 thousand people, mainly from the WW1.

Former premises of Stalag VIII B (344) Lamsdorf, POWs camp from WW2, are adjacent to the cemetery. It is the place where, from the beginning of the war, POWs from the anti-Hitler coalition were deported (first mostly Polish in 1939, and British from 1940). The next object on the so called Route of Memory is the Museum having its seat in the buildings of former Wehrmacht range headquarters, then former premises of the Labour Camp in Łambinowice (1945-1946), in which over 5 thousand German citizens were waiting for their resettlement into Germany, and the cemetery of its victims (1.5 thousand individuals).

Then one will find the remnants of Stalag 318/ VIII F (344) Lamsdorf, established for the group of POWs which was the most numerous and the most violently treated by the German, namely the Red Army soldiers. In Lamsdorf it amounted to ca. 200 thousand people, from which ca. 40 thousand died. POWs representing other nationalities were also incarcerated in this Stalag: Italian, Greek, Slovak, French, Romanian, and in 1944, the insurgents of the Warsaw Uprising, commemorated by an obelisk in 1997.

Old POWs cemetery. All pictures in the article courtesy of CMJW
Zdjęcia w artykule: Andrzej Rudiak

Old POWs cemetery. All pictures in the article courtesy of CMJW.
The last element of the Route of Memory is the Cemetery of Soviet POWs (1942-1945) with the Monument of Martyrology of the Prisoners of War devoted to all POWs incarcerated during WW2 in Lamsdorf camps. The facility was given its current shape in the 1960s.

For 55 years, the Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War, institution with a wide scope of activity, having no counterpart among European museums and located within the premises of the site, have been taking care of this special place. The Museum concentrates on two POWs systems in totalitarian states in Europe during WW2 – the Third Reich and USSR. It constitutes a cultural institution under the auspices of the Opole Voivodeship Self Government, since January 1st 2018 co-managed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. It belongs to martyrological museums, established in Poland after WW2 in order to document war crimes, cherish the memory of victims and constitute a warning.

The Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War collects, stores, prepares, digitalizes and makes available numerous artifacts and archive documents. Its specialist collection referring to subjects concerning POWs belongs to the most precious and extensive ones in Poland. They form the basis for informative activity for all those interested in the fate of POWs during WW2 together with intense and rich research, publishing and exhibition work as well as appreciated educational activity.
Interview with Dr. Violetta Rezler-Wasilewska, Director of the Central Museum of Prisoners-of-War

First of all, we would like to congratulate you on receiving the distinction. The Łambinowice facility constitutes the fifth object distinguished with the European Heritage Label. Where are you searching for this “European symbolical value” in this particular place?

Thank you very much for your congratulations. It is indeed a very important distinction for me. We are keen on the fact that the European Commission (and first the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) have noticed and appreciated in this way the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice of which we take care and within the borders of which one of two seats of our museum is located. That they also noticed our work and the work of our predecessors. And we have been conducting it for 55 years, constantly studying and popularizing POWs’ life stories. We are doing it in the context of the Łambinowice memorial, but not only; the context is also a lot wider as it reaches other places in Europe in which soldiers taken into captivity were incarcerated. I find the “European symbolical value” of Łambinowice that you are referring to in representing them all. It is still a less known part of European history. The figure of a POW, wearing not only a Red Army or Italian uniform, but also Polish or French one, occupies a distant position in the narration of wartime history of subsequent states. But does not a prisoner who rose to fight with the oppressor and got into captivity basing on humanitarian law of war that international community, fortunately, managed to develop and complement after both world wars, deserve to be present in collective memory and – together with other victims – is he to warn about armed conflicts and violence?

The Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice thus marks in particular the traumatic experience in the history of Europe with relation to POWs. The way in which they were treated in the most dramatic period, during WW2, when Wehrmacht established in Lamsdorf one of the biggest centres of isolation of POWs in Europe (at the time, as many as several hundred thousand soldiers of the anti-Hitler coalition passed through it), would reflect anti-humanistic Nazi ideology, resulting in the death of many thousands individuals, persecuted through purposeful and cynical lowering of living conditions. This is the most violent chapter in the history of POWs in Łambinowice, even though it had begun already in the 19th century from a Prussian POW camp for several thousand French soldiers and would last throughout WW1, in a German camp complex already for several dozen thousand POWs from a few armies of the entente. The striking aspect of this history consists in the scale growing with time and, one could even say, a certain sequential character, marked by increasingly distinct breaking of basic human rights.

If we complement this image with camps for migrating civilians, i.e. a German (1921-1924) and Polish one (1945-1946), we will realize that the Łambinowice memorial also witnessed dramatic events being the result of international politics and population movements after both world wars, also characteristic for Europe. The process of commemorating the victims of the repressive camp from the years 1945-1946 together with public discourse around it, particularly heated in the last decade of the 20th century, constitute another example of European history. This is an attempt to reconcile and build the narration that would describe human experience of totalitarian regimes in a way which will be as multi-sided and empathic as possible and thus will enable European integration at a social level.

Through juxtaposing all these arguments we will understand that the place was largely marked by the results of progressing militarization of Europe in the 19th and 20th century – the wars, which were accompanied by increasing undermining of humanistic (and humanitarian) values. Powerful, anti-war message of the Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice makes it a symbol of civilizational offenses and a warning sign against the effects of one person’s contempt towards the other.
The Site of National Remembrance in Łambinowice is, as we can see, a multidimensional historical place, which is for sure the source of both great challenges as well as numerous opportunities.

Yes indeed. The starting point for creating a martyrological museum in Łambinowice consisted in drastic violation of human rights by Wehrmacht in Lamsdorf during WW2, aimed at the soldiers of anti-Hitler coalition. However, current tasks of the Museum extend far beyond WW2 and the geographical limits of Lamsdorf/Łambinowice, as they refer to: POW system in both totalitarian regimes during WW2 (including the fate of POWs incarcerated in other German camps in Europe as well as those in NKVD’s captivity); POW system in Lamsdorf in the earlier periods of WW1 and the Prussian-French war, as well as social consequences and traces of wars in Lamsdorf/Łambinowice. I am thinking here about camps for civilians displaced as a result of the borders changing after the war.

Through our activity in these fields, sometimes from a full perspective and sometimes only in connection with a selected aspect, we make attempts for the memorial site in Łambinowice to be perceived as a universal symbol warning against the effects of abandoning the respect for human dignity and autonomy in favour of physical violence and ideological captivity. The history of this place refers to the negation of liberty and equality. The Museum builds its educational and civil message around these values, joining the actions promoting the respect for human rights.

It is not an easy task, in particular when resentments and distinct reluctance towards discovering a new perspective come to the fore. It is very difficult to discuss with emotions constructed upon personal experience or the experience of one’s relatives. However, it seems that we have already done the hardest part. I am referring here to the dispute of two memories – in simplified terms: Polish memory vs. German memory that we experienced on a large scale during the critical decades of the 20th and 21st century. At the time, the Łambinowice site was visited by large groups of those who were not curious of one another, but who were brought to us by this experience, their own or their parents’ or grandparents’. For some of them the year 1945 marked the end of the trauma of WW2, but for the other it was only the beginning... What we did then (and what we still patiently do), respecting individual memory and presenting our scientific findings, turned out to be appropriate. We want to follow this direction. Education raising the awareness of cultural background as well as psychological and social consequences of armed conflicts and evidence-based work should present itself as a good suggestion for the society 75 years after the war.

The museum is already extending its activity (in particular connected with popularization) with polyphonic, highly humanistic message, extending beyond factual, strictly historical framework of a memorial site. This message emphasizes the values universal for European civilizational circle, so negated by the wartime history of Lamsdorf/Łambinowice. At the same time we pay greater attention to the already mentioned social and psychological, micro historical context of the events that we analyse and commemorate. We expect such attitude to help in showing our addressees, to a growing extent deprived of direct family message, how the mechanisms of war and violence modify everyday reality of a human being. It is all a constant warning.

“We take part in shaping a human being responsible for the present and the future” – it is probably one of the most important elements of CMJW’s mission.

The thing that we can learn when we know the past it is responsibility for the present and the future. It is the awareness that accompanies not only us, the employees of CMJW, but generally all staff members in martyrological museums.

Even if a large part of current activities of CMJW refers to the material basis of the functioning of a memorial site, which requires a lot of effort, so in order to physically present relics of the history of POWs, educational activity is of equal importance for us.
It defines, as I have already mentioned, a memorial site in the categories of a symbol of civilizational injustice as well as a warning sign against the effects of contempt for human dignity and basic human rights. Such message becomes an important means of education, both historical as well as civil, representing particular importance in current social reality in Europe as some of its aspects seem to be redefined by media acts of escalating violence, humanitarian crises and the radicalization of public discourse. It all prompts to constantly asking the crucial question of European civil education: is difficult history of Europe in the 20th century really a lesson for the contemporary?

You have received the information about being awarded with the distinction already during the crisis connected with coronavirus pandemic. After more than two months, CMJW is returning to the new normal. How did you cope with your activity in the reality marked by the epidemic?

Well, I think that our museum, similarly to other Polish museums, have managed with the state of epidemic quite well. We very quickly implemented the necessary procedures, switched the organization of our duties generally to telework and were regularly updating the schedule (and we still do this). Some events, such as for example our most important anniversary reminding on March 17th of the liberation of Stalag 344 Lamsdorf or the POWs Poetry Recitation Competition “Let us not lose hope” had to be cancelled. Other ones, such as Polish national historical project “Before it is too late” are realized in the virtual space. If the conditions allow us to do so, we intend to carry out more activities in the autumn. We maintain the contact with our visitors online on social media. For a week, our seats both in Opole as well as in Łambinowice are open for visitors – but there are not many of them, which is understandable. We are still in the reality of pandemic. We all need to be careful and have the most reasonable attitude towards the situation.

What are your plans for the nearest future?

We intend to continue our civil education developed on scientific bases and non-material testimonies. For this reason we would among others like to modify the educational offer and the message addressed to museum visitors – with the narration taking into account the perspective of micro history and joint educational project “Lamsdorf-Auschwitz, Auschwitz-Lamsdorf” carried out together with the Auschwitz Memorial constitutes an example here. We want to establish the cooperation with partners from the European Heritage Label network, extend international cooperation (e.g. through Erasmus+, the offer for foreign students), develop our competencies in the field of visitors service.

What is more, with one of European Heritage Label aims in mind, being the support for synergy between cultural heritage and modern art and creativity, the museum intends to inscribe the activities aimed at popularizing the European dimension of the facility. Works which are supposed to accompany these activities are also ahead of us.

This year it is the conservation of post-camp remnants of Stalag 318/VIII F (344) Lamsdorf and creating there open air exhibition, together with popularizing scientific findings in several consistent publications, continuing the queries in archives and libraries, organizing the actions of collecting memorabilia after POWs “Saved memorabilia, preserved memory”, implementing new image as well as intensely searching for funds for the next stages of reconstruction of the museum in Łambinowice in order to create a convenient entrance zone, modern education halls and storage space and for the entire complex in order to take into account the needs of people with disabilities. We have also dreams, but they are to be taken care of later.

Interviewer: Paweł Sawicki
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s new online exhibition shows how years of escalating exclusion and persecution of the Rohingya at the hands of the Burmese military eventually resulted in genocide.

“Beyond the rooftops of the refugee camps, Rohingya can see the mountains in their home country of Burma. Today, nearly one million members of the Muslim minority live across the border in Bangladesh.

Many fled violent attacks in 2017 by the Burmese military, who murdered their family members and destroyed their homes and villages. Thousands died. The Rohingya remain in the camps because they fear for their lives if they return home.

They have faced persecution before. After a 1962 military takeover, extreme nationalism based on religion and ethnicity began to take hold in Burma. In the decades that followed, the military attacked minority groups including the Rohingya.
LEAVING THEIR OLD LIVES BEHIND

Fearing for their lives, Rohingya left Burma with little notice. They brought the few possessions they could carry. Most lost everything. Families separated in the chaos. Women and children traveled with husbands, sons, and brothers—killed by the Burmese military. Those who survived tried to help elderly relatives make the trip. Once in Bangladesh, Rohingya had to make do with limited shelter and few supplies.

In this photograph, Rohingya coming from Burma wait for small boats to take them to mainland Bangladesh.

*Photo: Greg Constantine*
"This exhibition explores how the Rohingya slowly went from citizens to outsiders—and how the 2017 violence forms part of a larger, sustained campaign of genocide," says the opening text of the exhibition.

For decades, the Burmese military has prosecuted its Rohingya population, a Muslim minority in the largely Buddhist country. The exhibition shows how the Rohingya went from being citizens at the country’s founding in 1948, to persecuted outcasts today as Burma evolved into an increasingly ethno-nationalistic state with citizenship based on religion and ethnicity. By August 2017, the Burmese military’s long history of violence against the Rohingya escalated into brutal mass killings, sexual violence, and displacement. The Museum has raised concerns about the risk of genocide facing the Rohingya since 2013 and determined in 2018 that there was compelling evidence that the Burmese military committed genocide against them.

The exhibition has been divided into five chapters:
I. Belonging II. Targeted III. Weakened IV. Destroyed V. Surviving.

During the violence in 2017, more than 700,000 Rohingya fled to neighboring Bangladesh. Many walked barefoot and bleeding from injuries they had no time to treat. They carried young children on their backs. They only had the possessions they managed to stuff quickly into plastic bags.

Struggling to adjust to the loss of their loved ones, Rohingya in refugee camps face a new normal. They can’t work and rely upon humanitarian assistance for basic needs like food and shelter. Children, mostly unable to attend school, try to recover from the trauma they witnessed. Some of the women struggle to recover from the trauma of surviving gang rape. Most long to return home.

"I want to tell the citizens of the world that I am also a human being, and Rohingyas are also human beings. What they did with a pen actually murdered our lives! After attacking us with a pen and erasing our existence, then they physically attacked us ... The world didn’t see how they have systematically destroyed us. The world just saw their physical attacks on us. There has been no Justice for us .... What they have done to us is genocide. — Mohammed, a Rohingya man". These words end the online exhibition.
THE BEGINNING

“I went inside Bodru’s house and saw so many people at the gate of the house: men and women altogether.”
— Ayub, a Rohingya man

On the morning of August 25, several members of the regiment attacked a border guard and military base near Maung Ba. Seven military trucks filled with armed soldiers drove into the village. Villagers sought refuge inside the compound of one of the wealthiest families, thinking they’d be protected. Instead, the soldiers forced even more villagers into the large property, separating men and women in the process.

The soldiers made the women remove their clothing. They were then searched with flashlights for valuables, like cell phones and jewelry.
“We launched this exhibition to give voice to the victims and help establish the historical record as the Burmese government denies the genocide against the Rohingya.” said Naomi Kikoler, Director of the Museum’s Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide. “There has been no significant improvement in the Rohingya’s status. Those who remain in Burma face an ongoing risk of genocide as do the one million refugees in Bangladesh should they return home.”

“The Burmese government has attempted to silence and erase the Rohingya people,” says Greg Constantine, the exhibition’s curator. Over 14 years, Constantine has made 16 trips to the region to document the Rohingya’s plight. His photographs and the eyewitness testimonies he collected are featured throughout the exhibition. “This exhibition attempts to highlight the Rohingya community’s history and humanity,” continues Constantine. “We hope their stories in their own voices will help people gain a better understanding of who the Rohingya people are and the atrocities they have endured.”

"It is meaningful for the US Holocaust Memorial Museum to create this historic exhibition to highlight the genocide that we have suffered,” said Tun Khin, president of the Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK. "We have been persecuted by the Burmese government, policy by policy, in a slow march toward genocide that is seeking to destroy us. People need to know that genocide still happens in the 21st century, and through this exhibition people will be able to understand what we have endured. It is powerful to know that we are not forgotten."

The exhibition can be found at: https://www.ushmm.org/burma-genocide.
The exhibition „Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away” prepared jointly by the Spanish company Musealia and the Auschwitz Memorial has received the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Award. It is the most prestigious European award in the heritage field.

The exhibition traces the development of Nazi ideology and tells the transformation of an ordinary Polish town of Oświęcim where during the occupation the German Nazis created the largest concentration camp and extermination center—at which ca. 1 million Jews, and tens of thousands of others, were murdered. Victims included Polish political prisoners, Sinti and Roma, Soviet POWs, and other groups persecuted by Nazi ideology, such as: disabled, asocials, Jehovah’s Witnesses or homosexuals. In addition, the exhibition contains artifacts that depict the world of the perpetrators—SS men who created and operated the largest of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

“The award is an important signal. The exhibition has been very well received by the visitors as well as by schools and the media. It is a very good, modern, extensive exhibition about the history of the camp and its victims. But today, for me, it is extremely important that the history of dehumanization of the victims touches the very heart of our postwar identity,” said Auschwitz Museum director Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński.

“Regardless of the development of the epidemic situation in the world, every step in creating a safer, more friendly world that respects human rights is a step against all ideologies of hatred, racism, antisemitism or xenophobia,” he emphasized.

Luis Ferreiro, the director of Musealia said, that it is not possible to understand the space of freedom, democracy and security that we share today as Europeans without facing this story. “Europe is built on the moral ruins of Auschwitz. It happened in the heart of Europe and just a generation ago,” he stated.

“This recognition encourages us to keep working in preserving this vital heritage of memory, reaching out with its message to citizens all over the world,” he added.
According to the jury this awareness-raising and educational project preserves the memory of one of the worst episodes in the history of humanity and is based on deep, scientific, historical research.

“The topic is communicated in a direct and accessible way for different audiences without lessening its importance and has already reached an impressive number of visitors. The exhibition is supported by social media dissemination of the contents in order to approach a young audience and to maintain the remembrance of the victims of Auschwitz,” stated the jury.

“A strong network of institutions was engaged in the project and it is an example of good practice for partnerships between non-profit and for-profit organisations. The exhibition opens up the platform for increasing the knowledge, collection and interpretation of the documentation. Its display succeeded in recreating the emotional experience of visiting the real site, which is challenging for a travelling exhibition and is thanks in part to the richness of the content,” the Jury continued.

The first presentation of the exhibition took place in Madrid where it was visited by over 600 thousand people. Now it is displayed in the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York. Featuring more than 700 original objects, the New York presentation of the exhibition allow visitors to experience artifacts from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum including hundreds of personal items—such as suitcases, eyeglasses, and shoes—that belonged to survivors and victims of Auschwitz.

Other artifacts include concrete posts that were part of the fence of the Auschwitz camp; fragments of an original barrack for prisoners from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz camp; a desk and other possessions of the first and the longest serving Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss; a gas mask used by the SS; Pablo Picasso’s Lithograph of Prisoner; and an original German-made Model 2 freight wagon used for the deportation of Jews to the ghettos and extermination camps in occupied Poland.

The European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards were launched by the European Commission in 2002 and have been run by Europa Nostra ever since. This year This year, Europe’s top honor in the heritage field went to 21 exemplary achievements from 15 European countries. Musealia and the Auschwitz Memorial received the award in “Education, Training and Awareness-rising” category.

The awards celebrate and promote best practices related to heritage conservation, research, management, volunteering, education and communication. In this way, they contribute to a stronger public recognition of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for Europe’s society, economy and environment. The Awards are funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

Heritage supporters from Europe and all around the world can vote online for their favorite award winners and decide which achievement will win this year’s Public Choice Award. In times of confinement and physical distancing, the European Commission and Europa Nostra hope to inspire a particularly large number of people to discover this year’s award-winning achievements. The Public Choice Award will be announced after the summer.

More information:

New international travelling exhibition on the history of Auschwitz opened in Madrid

A huge success of the Auschwitz exhibition in Madrid

Our responsibility today is the same as it was 'not so long ago and not so far away. "Auschwitz" exhibition opened in New York.

Over 100,000 visitors of the exhibition about Auschwitz in New York. The exhibit extended until August 2020.
“The magazine contains texts published online that strive to popularize the topic of the experiences and fate of the prisoners of German camps at Majdanek, in Belzec and Sobibor. They have been very well reviewed so far, reaching over 900,000 Internet users. We therefore decided to periodically present them in the form of a concise publication”, the Introduction states.

The first issue of the magazine, having Dorota Niedziałkowska as its editor, includes twelve articles. Among them there are for example texts devoted to the liquidation of the ghetto in the Podzamcze district in Lublin, the 78th anniversary of the beginning of mass deportations to German Nazi extermination camp in Sobibor, as well as fragments of regular publications about e.g. love behind Majdanek fences, escapes from the camp, air raids or sculptures performed in KL Lublin in 1943.

“We would like to invite you to find out more about the difficult events of the 20th century through the most interesting fragments of the history of KL Lublin, SS-Sonderkommando Belzec, and SS-Sonderkommando Sobibor. We also hope that the proposed thematic cycles, told with passion by museum experts who look after the memorial sites at Majdanek, Belzec, and Sobibór on a daily basis, will inspire you to deepen your knowledge and develop the historical interests”.

The cover includes the photo of Bolesław Burski, nickname Jasieńczyk. In the present issue of the magazine readers will find the text by Anna Wójcik presenting the story of his life. Born in 1905 in Warsaw, Burski was an agricultural engineer, soldier of the Polish Army and scouting organizer. Before the outbreak of WW2, he worked as a landscape architect in Dąbrowa Górnicza. During the war he was active in the resistance movement, organizing sabotage networks, cooperating with intelligence and counter-espionage headquarters. He was arrested at night on December 26th/27th 1942 as a result of denunciation. After a few weeks spent in the Pawiak prison in Warsaw, he was deported to the camp at Majdanek.
At Majdanek, Burski met his comrades from the underground, including Dr. Romuald Sztaba from Dąbrowa Górnicza, which directly contributed to the organisation of a conspiracy network in the camp and the launch of intelligence activities. This facilitated earlier reconnaissance of Majdanek and establishing contact with civilian workers employed in the camp. Burski would also liaise with Janina Siwińska, who forwarded reports on the situation at Majdanek to the command of the Home Army,” the text states.

On April 18th 1944, Bolesław Burski was taken from Majdanek in the evacuation transport to KL Auschwitz. In January 1945, he escaped from the evacuation column and joined the partisans. After the war, recognized as a Home Army soldier, he was incarcerated in the Security Office (UB) prison in Katowice and released in August 1945. He came back to Dąbrowa Górnicza and got a job compliant with his original profession. He died in 1984.

The State Museum at Majdanek began to prepare for print Bolesław Burski’s memoirs from the occupation period, written down in the years 1945-48: “we are searching for any information concerning Bolesław Burski. Maybe you are in possession of some souvenirs, documents, letters, photographs or everyday objects? Or maybe you are his relatives? Please contact us by e-mail at: archiwum@majdanek.eu”
Teaspoon

At 12 o'clock midday we assembled for our 'meal.' We lined up at the first window where we were given a tin mug, at the next window we were given soup made of coarse grains, water and sometimes a small potato. Before our midday 'meal' and before our coffee in the evening, we were forced to listen to the orchestra and to sing. This was in order to drown the cries of anguish and despair.

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RENDERING WITNESS.
VIRTUAL TOUR.

Though the Museum building is temporarily closed, the exhibition of the Museum of Jewish Heritage Rendering Witness: Holocaust-Era Art as Testimony is available online.

Artwork from the exhibition, in the order it’s displayed at the Museum, is presented in a slideshow online. A playlist of videos that give behind-the-scenes insight into the exhibition is available here.

Just as every Holocaust survivor’s testimony is unique, so too is art produced by Jews and other victims of the Nazis during the Holocaust. It is a miracle that this art survived. Each artwork in this exhibition reasserts the artist’s humanity and individuality, qualities too often obscured by iconic Holocaust photographs that were taken by the Nazis or their collaborators.

These artists documented the Holocaust as it unfolded around them, providing a unique personal layer to the visual culture of World War II. Some of the art depicts iconic scenes of the Holocaust, such as ghetto topographies and deportations, while other works are more introspective. The art in this exhibition is not accompanied by historical artifacts produced by the Nazis and their collaborators. While it is important to document perpetrator-made artifacts and images, the art in this exhibition stands alone.

Museums and memorials rely on photographic evidence; some survivors produce art reflecting their experiences; and various films and television productions have recreated scenes of World War II.
Zdjęcia w artykule: Andrzej Rudiak

"Terezin view from a window. 1943" by Joseph (Jo) Eduard Adolf Spier
But what was it like for the deported cartoonist looking out a barrack window at an SS flag?

When a young girl imprisoned in a ghetto was advised by her father, "Draw what you see," how did she respond?

Rendering Witness: Holocaust-Era Art as Testimony highlights work from the Museum of Jewish Heritage collection made during and immediately after the Holocaust in Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, and Poland. Much of this art was created in secret, with artists facing punishments as harsh as death if they were caught. Some of the artworks are tiny, reflecting their hidden origins. Other drawings were folded and hidden underneath a mattress or beneath one's prisoner uniform.

To peer into history through the eyes of an artist, documenting what they saw and how they saw it, is the rarest of encounters. Rendering Witness offers a special opportunity to see art made under the most difficult circumstances – and to learn the stories of how it survived.
We would like to invite you to participate in an international, digital workshop on contemporary academic, artistic, and theoretical approaches concerning sources of memory and the Holocaust, held across the 25th and 26th June 2020 [half days]. Although collecting sources from the Holocaust period is the basis for research, education, and commemoration, they are not always so straightforward to work with. Moreover, their use in multidisciplinary research methods invites a wider breadth of engagement, both in public and private memory discourses. In this workshop, we aim to address such issues.

We welcome a range of topics that address new ways of understanding and utilising sources of memory and the Holocaust, including written or oral testimonies, contemporary museological and digital approaches, objects and material culture, photography as well as evidentiary documents pertaining to the Holocaust and after. We aim to provide a relaxed and safe space for our participants to discuss their individual approaches, and the challenges and successes they have faced in their academic or creative approaches. As researchers it is important that we are able to share ideas and work through problematic aspects.

We encourage early post-graduate researchers to apply, as well as those working with sources in various other practices outside of academia, such as artists, curators, museum staff and filmmakers. We hope this will lead to a lively workshop, where participants and presenters can give and receive constructive feedback, and establish connections with one another for future potential collaborations.

The workshop will take place on the digital platform Zoom. Each presenter will speak for 10 minutes on their subject of choice, which in some way engages with original Holocaust sources. This will follow a standard panel format. The sessions will be open to everyone who registers.

Please, send a 200-300 word summary of your proposed presentation and a short bio to bahsblog@gmail.com before 7th June 2020. We look forward to receiving them!