NEW MUSEUM WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN CRACOW
KL PLASZOW MEMORIAL

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF CLOSING BORDERS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO

IHRA ADOPTS WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTIGYPSISM / ANTI-ROMA DISCRIMINATION

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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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The borders of the Warsaw Ghetto were closed on 16 November 1940. Approximately one-third of the inhabitants were isolated overnight. One hundred and thirty-eight thousand Jews were resettled in the area designated by the German occupant, while one hundred and thirteen thousand Poles were displaced. On the 80th anniversary of this event, we recall the tragic situation of hundreds of thousands of citizens, forced to live and die in inhumane conditions.

As early as November 1939, barbed-wire fences and plaques were erected at the exit of some streets of the district predominantly inhabited by Jews. “Plague, entry prohibited.” The official reason for creating the ghetto was to stop the typhus epidemic, which was to spread in parts of the town inhabited mainly by Jews.

“In so doing, the authorities wanted to isolate the carriers of dangerous diseases. People who called themselves doctors of medicine justified this statement. Science has long since eliminated medieval quarantines not only as cruel but as pointless. Pointless? After all, it is not about eradicating an epidemic; it is about eradicating Jews. Therefore, they are very intentional.” - said doctor, Ludwik Hirszfeld, an immunologist.

Practically every week humiliating prohibitions and restrictions of freedom were introduced against Jewish residents of Warsaw. It was the harbinger of the ghetto. On 1 April 1940, following an order from the occupying authorities, the Judenrat (‘Jewish Council’) began building walls around the territory of the ‘epidemic area’ with its funds.

“... Here - at the intersection of Żelazna and Krochmalna Streets - the border wall started springing up right under the windows of tenement houses. From dawn to dusk, the screams of the bricklayers were heard, and water from the hydrant, open at the side, surged onto the roadway. In two shifts, the rolled wheelbarrows whimpered vigorously, and the wet thumping of the trowel and mortar pressed on the bricks spread. They were building the wall. It reached the knees, then the arms of the bricklayers. They measured, laid the bricks, and carried on. When it was twice the height of man, they reinforced the top of the wall with broken bottle glass, densely tossed on damp cement. The frost was drawing on, the mortar stiffened in the wooden tub, and the bricklayers stiffened in the wooden tub, and the bricklayers hurried the assisting boys while rubbing the cold off their hands,” wrote Bogdan Wojdowski, a ghetto survivor, in his autobiographical novel “Bread Thrown to the Dead”.

The wall was completed on 1 April, and on 16 November 1940, the “Jewish residential district” was closed. The ghetto was established by the decree of 2 October 1940 issued by the Warsaw District Governor Ludwig Fischer. German police stations were set up at the exit of the designated area. Passes were introduced for movement between the ghetto and the so-called Aryan section. The ghetto covered an area of 307 hectares. Approximately 460 000 Jews from Warsaw, including refugees and displaced persons from other cities, were forced to live in the area.

“Jewish bricklayers supervised by Nazi soldiers lay brick after brick. Those who do not work fast enough are beaten by the supervisors. It reminds me of the biblical description of our captivity in Egypt. But where is Moses who would free us from this new oppression? - Mary Berg (Miriam Wattenberg) noted in the “Diary from the Warsaw Ghetto”.

Photo: Warsaw Ghetto Museum
Był mur
80. rocznica zamknięcia granic getta warszawskiego
16 listopada 2020
www.1943.pl
By mid-1940, nearly fifty fragments of the wall had been built. It was three metres long and crowned with barbed wire at the top. The borders of the ghetto also led between properties, marked by the walls of buildings. Given its strategic communication importance to the entire city, Chłodna Street was excluded from the ghetto area. The wall was erected next to the pavements and a footbridge built over the street, which connected the “small” and “large” ghetto.

“The walls have several outlets. A guard, in the local dialect “Wacha”, is stationed at the outlets. It comprises a few armed Germans, looking at the crowd with contempt, Polish police officers and servile Jewish police officers, who get hit in the face when they misbehave. At yours, on the side of the district, there are swarms of ragged children, and on the Aryan side, crowds of spectators looking at the event” - noted Hirszfeld. In the autumn of 1941, the death penalty was introduced for leaving the designated area or providing assistance to the Jews.

On the 80th anniversary marking the closure of the ghetto borders, the Warsaw Ghetto Museum in cooperation with the Social and Cultural Society of Jews in Poland commemorates this date. The social campaign ‘There was a Wall’ is our remembrance of hundreds of thousands of people forced into isolation. On 16 November, candles of memory will be lit in places reminiscent of this history. The main ceremonies will take place at a fragment of the wall on the premises of a high school, at 53 Sienna Street. Among the partners of the event is the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum.

The programme includes, among others: a series of educational seminars on the situation of Jews during World War II; educational film projects: “Walks in the vestiges of the ghetto” and “The ghetto in literature”; artistic events - video art “Wall/Walls” based on Ischak Berensztein’s prose and the project “people, places, events”, in the first stage depicting artists from Abraham Ostrzega’s shed. Online projects are available on the organisers’ websites: www.1943.pl and www.tskz.pl as well as on social media profiles. The exhibition “Every third among us”, depicting the situation on the other side of the wall, will be on display at Grzybowski Sq in Warsaw until the end of November. The events are held under the honorary patronage of the Mayor of the Capital City of Warsaw.
The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) announced the adoption of an internationally accepted non-legally binding working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination*, emphasising the importance of remembering the genocide of Roma, and acknowledging that the neglect of this genocide has contributed to the prejudice and discrimination that many Roma communities experience today.

"Antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination is a manifestation of individual expressions and acts as well as institutional policies and practices of marginalization, exclusion, physical violence, devaluation of Roma cultures and lifestyles, and hate speech directed at Roma as well as other individuals and groups perceived, stigmatized, or persecuted during the Nazi era, and still today, as "Gypsies." This leads to the treatment of Roma as an alleged alien group and associates them with a series of pejorative stereotypes and distorted images that represent a specific form of racism."

As anti-Roma sentiment has surged during the coronavirus pandemic, IHRA Member Countries recognise that urgent action is crucial.

Therefore, this definition, adopted by consensus by all of the IHRA’s 34 Member Countries, is the first ever IHRA decision taken outside its biannual Plenary meetings. All IHRA decisions represent a shared understanding on key issues. This non-legally binding working definition will guide the IHRA in its work in advancing education, remembrance and research on the genocide of Roma. It also serves as an educational tool that will raise awareness and enhance understanding of the continued discrimination Roma face every day. Member Countries consulted with Roma communities during the drafting and negotiation process, resulting in many suggested amendments which were incorporated into the final agreed definition. The IHRA’s adoption of this working definition is well timed, as in January this year, ministers and high-ranking government representatives from 35 countries gathered in Brussels to adopt the 2020 IHRA Ministerial Declaration to ensure the world remembers the Holocaust and works to contribute to a world without genocide.

The working definition is an important contribution to the implementation of Article 4 of the Ministerial Declaration, in which Member Countries pledged to “remember the genocide of the Roma. We acknowledge with concern that the neglect of this genocide has contributed to the prejudice and discrimination that many Roma communities still experience today.”

The adoption of a working definition on antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination has always been a priority of the German Presidency of IHRA, who assumed the leadership role in March 2020.
Ambassador Michaela Küchler, the IHRA President said: “All IHRA Member Countries are concerned that incidents of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination are on the rise. The current coronavirus pandemic has only fanned the flames of anti-Roma sentiment. Against this backdrop, the need to adopt a working definition of antigypsyism/anti-Roma discrimination has never been more urgent. I am delighted that we have taken collective action today to confront this evil. Our working definition will provide us with an important tool to address the rising tide of anti-Roma sentiment and safeguard the historical record of the crimes committed by Nazi Germany and its collaborators.”
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KL PLASZOW MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

The Cracow City Council adopted a draft resolution regarding the establishment of a municipal cultural institution from 1 January 2021: KL Plaszow Memorial and Museum in Cracow. German Nazi labour and concentration camp (1942–1945). The Museum will be a municipal cultural institution co-run with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage - following the letter of intent signed in June by the Mayor of Cracow and the Minister. The letter envisaged cooperation in terms of finance and content between the city and the ministry for the creation of the Memorial, as well as the establishment of a new institution.

- The idea of commemorating the area of the former KL Plaszow is our commitment to the victims and inhabitants of Cracow, who recall the war times, as well as to contemporary Cracow citizens and international communities. By creating the museum, we wish to begin a new chapter of mutual work on preserving the memory of this place of death and suffering, which is extremely important for our history - says Jacek Majchrowski, the Mayor of Cracow.

Memorial space
The Museum - KL Plaszow Memorial will be built on the grounds belonging to the Municipality of Krakow, the Jewish Religious Community in Krakow and the State Treasury. It will cover an area of about 40 hectares, which since 2002 has been entered in the register of monuments kept by the Małopolska Regional Monument Conservator, and the adjacent area of about 3 hectares.

The site of the former German Nazi labour and concentration camp Plaszow is a place of national memory. It is confirmed by two legal acts protecting it: the already mentioned entry in the register of monuments and the Act on War Graves and Cemeteries of 1936, which recognises the area of KL Plaszow as a war cemetery. The site of the camp includes the remains of three places of mass executions. The excavated bodies of the victims were burnt and scattered all over the area, formally making the camp premises a cemetery.

Given that the current "park and recreation" status of the space does not meet the requirements of the memorials, it has become necessary to establish an institution which will provide appropriate care and possess museum facilities. Such an approach will make it possible to manage the place consistently and in a planned manner, care for the memory, as well as teach about the history of the camp (in particular, the educational activity is to take into account the issue of the crime of genocide).

The KL Plaszow Museum and Memorial is to be founded on three pillars; the first two are: the site - an authentic witness to the suffering and death of the victims and the museum exhibition - presented in the Grey House and Memorial, the third pillar: education and dialogue - will be implemented in the Education Centre.

The commemoration project assumes keeping the area of the former camp as unchanged and authentic as possible, installing information boards and markings of important places, such as the place where bodies were burnt or the roll-call square. However, next to it, on Kamieński Street, a new museum building will be erected, the so-called Memorial with a permanent exhibition devoted to the history of KL Plaszow, as well as a parking lot for buses and a park. The Grey House will also be renovated (the building belonging to the Chevra Kadisha Funeral Society before the war, which was converted during the occupation into the
was converted during the occupation into the SS headquarters and incorporated into the camp. The project does not provide for the reconstruction of the camp infrastructure or the erection of other buildings in the post-camp area. However, there are future plans to adapt the ruins of the building located at the beginning of Jerozolimska Street to house an Educational Centre. Entrance to the premises of the camp will be free of charge.

The creation of a professional institution, such as a museum, constitutes a globally accepted organisational formula for the care and management of memorial sites.

Preparations for the creation of the Museum

The signing of a letter of intent expressing the willingness of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage, together with the Municipality of Cracow, to run a cultural institution entitled "KL Plaszow Memorial and Museum in Cracow. German Nazi Labour and Concentration Camp (1942-1945)" was preceded by an agreement between the city, the Jewish Community of Cracow and the Historical Museum of the City of Cracow, constituting a declaration of cooperation for the commemoration of the KL Plaszow camp (in 2017).

In 2018 the Cracow City Council passed a resolution on defining the directions of activities for the Mayor of the City of Cracow consisting in the creation of the "KL Plaszow Memorial and Museum". By order of the city's Mayor, a task force for the Plaszow Concentration Camp was also established to coordinate work on the creation of the Memorial.

In January 2020 the public consultations ended, which focused on the issues concerning the new museum, including the needs, expectations and comments of the residents on the land development concept and the surroundings of the KL Plaszow Memorial and Museum. The main demands made by the participants of the consultation concerned: improvement and
regulation of traffic around the future museum, free (non-ticketed) access to the premises of the Memorial Site, no fencing of the area, preservation of greenery on the site of the camp and no erection of new objects on the former camp premises. The summary of the consultation is an extensive report containing answers to specific demands made - the report (in Polish) is available here.

**We are obliged to remember**

"The creation and operation of the Museum will be a worthy and proper place to preserve the full memory of the victims of KL Plaszow. With the creation of the Museum, the memory of the tragic past can become a warning and a lesson for future generations, so the human race never experiences an equally dramatic fate. The Memorial and Museum is a guarantee of the effectiveness of the activities carried out and an appropriate step in the spirit of full historical responsibility for our common history" - as we read in the justification of the resolution.

The Museum of Cracow, as the substantive supervisor, developed the scenario of the new Museum and Memorial and carried out archaeological research on the site of the camp. The Museum also conducts research and educational work in the area of knowledge and remembrance of the former camp; for many years it has been educating, recounting and commemorating the difficult period of World War II as part of the Memorial Route and its branches: Pomorska Street, Pod Orłem Pharmacy and Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory.

The next stage, following the adoption of city council resolution on the creation of the Memorial and Museum, will be the signing of an agreement between the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the Municipality of Krakow on co-managing the new cultural institution. The new institution is to start operating on 1 January 2021. The estimated time necessary to complete the works on the creation of the Memorial and Museum, including the permanent exhibition, is approximately five years.
Amos Steinberg was born on 26 June 1938. He lived in Prague. On 10 August 1942, he was imprisoned along with his parents Ludwig (Ludvík) and Ida in the Theresienstadt Ghetto near Prague. They were all deported to Auschwitz.

From surviving documents we know that the mother and son were deported to Auschwitz in the same transport on 4 October 1944. They were likely both murdered in a gas chamber after selection. We may presume that it was probably the boy’s mother who ensured that her child’s shoe was signed. The father, however, was deported to Auschwitz in an earlier transport. We know that he was transferred from Auschwitz to Dachau on 10 October 1944. He was liberated in the Kaufering sub-camp.

Thanks to a family living in Israel, who contacted the Museum, we received several additional biographical information and a few family photographs. The Holocaust survivor Ludvík Steinberg (Yehuda Shinan) emigrated to Israel in May 1949. He became a teacher and principal of several schools in Israel. He was highly valued and liked by his pupils and teachers who worked with him. He still loved music and worked as a cantor in several synagogues. He also conducted choirs. He passed away in 1985. His wife, Chana Shinan, whom he had met before the war in Prague, died in 2014. They have 6 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

'I am deeply grateful to the Steinberg family for the information they have given us and for supplementing our knowledge. With this gesture, objects inextricably linked to Auschwitz lose the anonymity weighing down on them - sometimes unbearable - and acquire a deeper, individual significance. As an object of great documentary value, the shoe is proof of the suffering of a particular person, and along with thousands of other objects that we preserve at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, evidence of the genocide that took place here,' said Museum Director Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński.

One of the suitcases in the Museum Collections bears the name “Ludwig Steinberg”. Preserved documentation shows that at least two people went by this name and surname at KL Auschwitz. However, based on the date of arrival of the transport of Ludwig, Ida and Amos Steinberg to the camp, one may conclude that it is very likely that this suitcase is connected to them.

An important indication is the number “541” found on the suitcase. 'It is hardly visible to the naked eye. It was successfully deciphered through photographs taken under infrared light. It is the number under which Amos was registered on the transport list to the Theresienstadt Ghetto. It has been appended to the rest of the data in the suitcase. It is another indication that the suitcase was probably associated with Amos’s family, and perhaps even directly with him,’ said Hanna Kubik from...
Kubik from the Museum Collections. ‘We do not know for sure who arrived with it to Auschwitz. Perhaps Amos’s belongings were packed into it earlier, and hence the number was written there. Instances, where the same suitcase was used in transports to the Theresienstadt Ghetto and then, during the deportation to Auschwitz, by two different people, were quite common,’ added Kubik.

‘We have decided that, during the subsequent preservation work, the suitcase with the name ‘Ludwig Steinberg’ will be moved from the room where it is currently stored to the main exhibition. It will be placed among the other suitcases on display there. We will pass on the knowledge about the object to the guides, who often introduce elements of the history of particular people into their tour narrative,’ added Director Cywiński.

In total, the Germans transferred 24 transports of over 46,000 Jews from the Theresienstadt Ghetto to Auschwitz. About 18,000 of them were placed in a special family camp in section Blb of the Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp.
Over the course of five days at a BMG Soundlab songwriting camp conducted in Los Angeles, Lesser met with a group of 14 songwriters, producers and artists from the US and Europe including Toby Gad (John Legend, Beyonce, Fergie), Lindy Robbins (Jason Derulo, David Guetta), Edd Holloway (Lewis Capaldi, Martin Garrix), Georgia Ku (Dua Lipa, Zedd), and Emily Vaughn (Netta), among others.

Drawing on Lesser’s deeply affecting stories and experiences during the Holocaust and his life, the songwriters and producers went on to write four songs that conveyed his message into their music. Lesser joined the sessions, gave feedback and even participated in one song with a recorded Jewish prayer (‘Zachor Intro’).

The campaign was launched by Ben Lesser in a special edition of The Global Classroom webcast on Tuesday September 22 to an audience of an estimated 1.8m schoolchildren worldwide.

Lesser, founder of ZACHOR Holocaust Remembrance Foundation and ZACHOR Holocaust Curriculum, said, "The opportunity to partner with BMG, WHO, UN, UNICEF, Microsoft and so many incredible artists to create unique music based off of my life story and then to bring this to students worldwide through the Global Classroom has been truly humbling...I hope the students worldwide feel the same way about the lessons we learned together."

UK songwriter Edd Holloway, who co-wrote much of Lewis Capaldi’s Number One hit album Divinely Inspired To A Hellish Extent, said, “Ben Lesser’s words really inspired us to go and write some music about how we can hopefully change the world for the better in the future.” These songs are now available as part of the Choose Love EP, available on all major streaming platforms (search for Ben Lesser).

The EP includes four tracks:
1. ‘Zachor Intro’
2. ‘Change Somebody’ (ft. Oda Loves You)
3. ‘Letter To The World’ (ft. Emily Vaughn)
4. ‘Zachor’
The new campaign is driven by online education and charity initiative The Global Classroom, a collaboration with the United Nations World Health Organization in partnership with music company BMG.

It is the first of a series of releases expected to emerge from a collaboration between The Global Classroom and BMG SoundLabs, the company’s proprietary songwriting series. Proceeds from the special projects will go to benefit global humanitarian efforts.

Future SoundLabs will include collaborations between songwriters and the International Olympics Committee (IOC) to create a song for the Refugee Olympics Team and a separate project with Covid-19 survivors, relatives of victims of Covid-19 and healthcare workers. Proceeds from the projects will go to benefit global humanitarian efforts. My story surviving the atrocities of the Holocaust and my mission to ensure we NEVER FORGET is just as important today, if not more, than it ever has been for students and artists to hear and understand,” said Ben Lesser.

Marian Wolf, BMG VP, Head of Global Writer Services, said, “Ben’s story and his message are both incredibly moving and of great timely relevance. Bringing together Ben and some of the world’s best songwriters to convey his message into song has been an extraordinary experience. We are extremely excited to be collaborating with the Global Classroom, WHO and the United Nations to create a series of BMG SoundLabs inspired by our project with Ben and following the release of the EP Choose Love.”
COMPETITION FOR A "COMIC BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE" IN FRANCE

The French National Bureau for Veterans and War Victims invites you to participate in a comic book contest related to the memory of the most important conflicts of the XX century. The theme of the 2020-2021 edition is "Women involved".

The contest has been in existence since 2011 and invites young people to reflect on the heritage of major contemporary conflicts in today's society. The authors are to create from A to Z (script, drawing, dialogues, etc.) a comic book whose subject matter refers to the memories of witnesses of history...

This unprecedented competition organized by ONACVG at the interface between history, art and memory in each region encourages young authors to work creatively and emotionally "with memory" while exploring the theme that will unfold in subsequent editions.

Through the use of a comic book as a unique and popular medium, this competition encourages young people to ask questions about history and its consequences for those who have experienced it. The competition does not aim to present the war, but rather to emphasize the importance of the story told, the reflection of a participant, victim or eyewitness of the war.

How can one participate in the contest?

The contest is divided into two categories: a group under the custody of a supervisor, and independent work - a supervisor of the association or independently, without educational support. The category "individual participant" is addressed to those who wish to create the comic book independently, without educational support. To register under this category, a candidate must send a completed "registration form for an independent candidate" along with a photocopy of their identity card to the interdepartmental memory and communication mission in their region.

The category "group" applies to young people who create comic books within the framework of a project with a supervisor. To register a group, the mentor must send the completed application form "for a group" together with a photocopy of his/her personal ID card to the interdepartmental memory and communication mission in his/her region.

Further information can be obtained here. The organizers also recommend reviewing the support materials, which may provide basic information on various major conflicts of the XX century as well as current issues related to memory. They also contain guidelines for creating a comic book.
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