SPORT AND ATHLETES IN KL AUSCHWITZ
TEMPORARY EXHIBITION AT THE AUSCHWITZ MEMORIAL

"THERE ARE ALWAYS EXCLUSIONS ON THE ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ"

THE SCHWARZ FAMILY CHEST

"AUSCHWITZ. MONOGRAPH OF THE HUMAN" BY PIOTR CYWIŃSKI
DELVES DEEPLY INTO HUMAN EMOTIONS INSIDE THE CAMP

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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.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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All editions: memoria.auschwitz.org
"THERE ARE ALWAYS EXCLUSIONS ON THE ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ".
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXCLUSIONS IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Exclusions were the topic of an international educational conference organised by the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the Auschwitz Museum entitled "'If This Is a Man?' Exclusions in the Modern World".

'The experience of Auschwitz and the Shoah had a profound effect on those who survived. At the end of the war, many survivors appealed for their experiences to become a warning to future generations. Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi titled one of his books on the Holocaust "If This Is a Man?". His words are extremely topical in today's world, which is why they were included in the conference title,' said ICEAH Director Andrzej Kacorzyk.

Opening the conference at one of the historic brick prisoner barracks, Andrzej Kacorzyk said: 'This building bears the marks of the struggle for survival, for life, for memory. The barrack is a silent witness to the camp's history: the demolition of the houses of the Polish residents of the village of Brzezinka, the use of building material for the hasty erection of the Birkenau camp with labour from the prisoners' frail bodies. Pioneering conservation work was carried out here several years ago. Thorough historical reconnaissance of the site was significant. During the conservation work, numerous personal objects belonging to the victims were discovered. Each object tells the story of the prisoners' daily struggle for life.'

'It was a different world, but it was created in our world. Auschwitz and the Holocaust do not fall from the sky; they are both born and originate from somewhere. On the road to Auschwitz, on the path to crime, there are always exclusions. Two years ago, we asked ourselves at an education conference: "Auschwitz - never again! Really?" This year, in a way, we suggest developing this theme and asking about exclusions and why we doubt that the person next to us is equal to us in rights and duties,' stressed Andrzej Kacorzyk.

The Museum's director, Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński said the work of an institution of memory is difficult because our civilisation is drifting in somewhat troubling directions: 'If our work is to make people aware and mobilise them to care about the future, then we must all be concerned about the rise of antisemitism and racism, the growth of extremist ideologies of hatred in various parts of the world. Our inability to respond to the most severe genocidal crises must also be troubling. They don't trigger a response - as seen, for example, in the Rohingya or Uighur tragedies, in our lack of empathy for the refugees.'

'It is hard not to feel that the pandemic has deepened our emotional separatism. We observe the development of the language of emotion, populism and demagoguery, which is considerably trivialising public debate in all parts of our world. It is compounded by the influence of social networks, which encapsulate the discussion in a very small, self-select group,' he added.

'The work of Memorials must take this evolution into account; hence we are reflecting on the very early stages of genocide this year. The dehumanisation of the enemy generally precedes the physical elimination of people. This is possible through exclusion. Exclusions that create a language of division using the apparatus of propaganda and verbal aggression can be seen in all the major tragedies of this world. The
IF THIS IS A MAN – EXCLUSIONS IN THE MODERN WORLD

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

JULY 7-8, 2021

International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum
propaganda and verbal aggression can be seen in all the major tragedies of this world. The exceptional effectiveness of propaganda everywhere is puzzling. That is what we want to reflect on. Exclusions affect various minorities - including minority identities. If someone's right to identity is denied, the person feels it with all their being. The reasons may vary, but an attack on identity is, in fact, an attack on a human being,' Piotr Cywiński pointed out.

The conference opened with a lecture by Prof. Gregory Stanton, president of Genocide Watch. He spoke about the universal characteristics of human nature that may lead to exclusion and ultimately even genocide and the next steps in the process leading to genocide.

'Man is an animal that uses symbols and classifications. We employ classification when we try to describe a phenomenon. It is an innate feature of our mind; however, we forget it is not an objective description of our surrounding reality but an abstraction created by us. We often place too much importance on this abstraction and use it against others. Excluding people from specific categories may lead to them being seen as strangers or enemies,' he said.

'Genocide, unfortunately, is not an exception but a rule in human history. If we are to combat genocide, then we must consider how we can influence human nature. There is only one race, the human race,' Prof. Stanton emphasised.

The first panel devoted to exclusion on account of religious belief brought together activists who deal with issues of Islamophobia, antisemitism and anti-Christianity on a daily basis and who reflected on the reason for such violent radicalisation and brutal persecution affecting representatives of the world's largest religions. They included Logan Carmichael, Director of Advocacy, China Aid; Dr Farid Hafez, Senior Research Fellow at the University of Salzburg; and Dr Leon Saltiel of the World Jewish Congress, UN and UNESCO Representative and Coordinator for Countering
The second panel aimed to present the true meaning of the exclusions affecting women and children during armed conflicts and discuss their consequences for excluded people. The panellists included Brita Fernandez Schmidt, former Managing Director Women for Women International; Léa-Rose Stoian, Deputy Director, We are NOT Weapons of War; and Marek Krupinski, Director General of UNICEF Poland.

On the second day of the conference Tuisina Ymania Brown, Co-Secretary General, ILGA World; Jovan Ulićević, Board Member, Transgender Europe; and Vyacheslav Melnyk, Executive Director of the Campaign against Homophobia, spoke about exclusions on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. The guests discussed why LGBT+ people arouse so much intolerance, where the consent to violence derives from, and why there are cases of law enforcement agencies remaining passive in the face of persecution.

The conference ended with an emotional meeting with victims and witnesses of exclusion, who tried to point out the commonalities and differences in their experiences and what impact the experience of exclusion had on their lives. Participants in the discussion included Almasa Salihović, Survivor of the conflict in Bosnia; Maung Zarni, activist counteracting the persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar; Linda Greta Zsiga, Roma activist encountering exclusion in Romania; and Dr Lutz van Dijk, historian and writer, representative of the LGBT+ community.

During the conference and open-call session, representatives of local organisations talked about their projects, which promote exclusion awareness in the modern world and provide genuine help and support to those who have fallen victim to it. The winners of the international competition “My memory, my responsibility. In my place”, organised by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Auschwitz-Birkenau Institute, also delivered their presentations.
The suitcase was found by accident in 2004 during the renovation of a tenement house at 10 Wolność i Niezawisłość Street in Łódź. It is a large object with dimensions 90 x 54 x 34 cm. It was made of wood and reinforced at the edges with leather-like material and metal fitting. Its surfaces were covered with painted canvas. The chest was found to contain objects made in the ghetto: three hangers and a pair of leather laced shoes with wooden soles. However, the inscription on the suitcase's cover, written in black paint on a white background, draws attention: E. & A. SCHWARZ. WIEN and on the underside: Erich & Anii Schwarz Wien. 9 Porzellangasse 8.

The suitcase owners were Anni (born 17 January 1910) and Erich (born 25 December 1894) Schwarz from Vienna. On 17 June 1939, the couple got married at the registry office in the Leopoldstadt district (district no. 2). It was probably at this time that they moved into a shared apartment in the Alsergrund district (the number 9 in the address refers to the numerical record of the district) at Porzellangasse 8. Before her marriage, Anni (née Lercher) lived with her parents Marie and Ernst, and sister Gertrude at Praterstraße 35/22 in Leopoldstadt. This part of the town was called Mazzesinsel or "Matzoh Island" by the locals due to the large Jewish population. During this period, Erich Schwarz lived at Kasernengasse 25/36 in the Mariahilf district (district no. 6).

The couple's story was intertwined with the fate of thousands of Viennese Jews. In March 1938, after Austria was incorporated into the Third Reich, repressions began that led to the rapid emigration of Jews. As of May 1938, those wishing to leave the country could do so through the Emigration Department of the Religious Community in Vienna (Israelitische Kulturgemeinde, IKG). In August 1938, the coordination of the entire process was assumed by the Central Office for Jewish Emigration (Zentrallstelle für jüdische Auswanderung), which was established exclusively for this purpose. The thousands of emigration declarations also include those completed by the Schwarz and Lercher families, illustrating the fate of hundred with similar stories. Annie's father, Ernest and her younger sister Gertrude managed to leave Austria. They travelled to Genoa, from where they made their way to New York. The opposite was the case for Marie, Anni's mother, who remained in Vienna. On 26 January 1942, she and Victor Lercher (her husband's brother?, born 23 January 1880) were deported in transport no. 15 to Riga, where they were murdered.

We do not know the reasons why Anni and Erich remained in their home town. Likely, financial (emigration was an expensive undertaking) or formal issues got in the way. It would explain why Ernst Lechrer had to travel first, and later on, attempt to bring the rest of the family members. During this time, the Schwarz family also lost their flat. It was the aftermath of the ordinance of 10 May 1939 regulating the renting of flats and which permitted the immediate termination of agreements with Jews. The municipal authorities used this opportunity to congregate Jews in houses designed exclusively for them. The married couple had to move into one of the so-called collective flats at Kohlmessergasse 6. The house was their last address in Vienna, following which, in the autumn of 1941, they began deporting Viennese Jews from the...
Aspangbahnhof station to ghettos set up in eastern Europe, including the Litzmannstadt (Łódź) ghetto.

The Schwarz couple were deported to Litzmannstadt on 28 October 1941 in transport no. 9. They arrived the following day, 29 October, in a group of 1,000 people as the fourth transport from Vienna to the ghetto. According to their declarations, they brought RM95 with them (not much, considering that RM100 was the maximum amount allowed for entry per person. Like other displaced persons from various cities in the Reich and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, nearly 20,000 persons in total were sent to collective housing known as "collectives". They were colloquially named after the newcomers' place of origin and transport number. The collective "Vienna IV" was located in two houses at Limanowskiego Street (Alexanderhofstrasse) 25 and 45 (part of these buildings still exist to date). The sanitary and living conditions in the communal quarters were terrible even when compared to the prevailing conditions in the entire ghetto. Permission was only given to move out to separate flats after some time. The Schwarz family took advantage of this opportunity by moving to Brzezińska Street (Sulzfelderstrasse) 35 flat 11 (currently Wojska Polskiego Street) on 29 January 1942. They were not the only tenants; other Viennese occupied the room with them: Seraphine Schindler and Kurt Schick with two children: Igor and Trude.

Initially, they had difficulties finding employment, as did other displaced persons. It was due to unfamiliarity with local realities and the Yiddish or Polish language. Surviving documentation shows that Anni was a housewife before the war while Erich worked as a design engineer. They were, however, in a fortunate situation as they were young (Anni was 31 and Erich 47) compared to the other deportees from Vienna (more than 40% of whom were over 60 years old). Unfortunately, their fate in the ghetto remains unknown; they probably experienced the same ordeal as the newly resettled population.

A few weeks after arriving at the ghetto in January 1942, mass deportations of its inhabitants commenced to the extermination
camp in Chełmno on the Ner. Western European Jews were left out in the first few months. It was finally decided that they would join the ranks of the deportees in the last operation between 4 and 15 May 1942. Anni and Erich Schwarz were also on the penultimate transport on 14 May. They were deported and then murdered in the extermination camp in Chełmno on the Ner.

The story of the victims is intertwined with the suitcase. The circumstances of its discovery beg the question of how it ended up in this location. It can be assumed that it was deposited intentionally by the owners themselves. The tenement housed a tailoring establishment where Anni may have found employment later on. Thus, she likely hid the suitcase that she couldn't carry on her further journey into the unknown. Officially, luggage up to 12.5 kg was permitted, but in practice, it was often confiscated at the assembly points or before entering the wagons at the Radegast station. During the deportation in May 1942, the seizure of all baggage became commonplace. Information regarding this practice reached those waiting to be referred for displacement. It is thus possible that they abandoned some of their possessions in this manner. It also happened that people sent for deportation were sent back from the concentration points to the ghetto (in this way, some of them avoided deportation), while their personal belongings were often forfeited. Hiding the suitcase may have served the purpose of protecting possessions from looting (in the absence of their owners). Therefore, the concealment of the suitcase may have served to protect their possessions from being plundered (in the absence of the owners). And if they didn't do it themselves, then did the concealment of the suitcase have anything to do with an attempt to hide for the duration of the displacement.

Another unanswered question is how the chest remained in this location for over sixty years until its discovery. Dworska Street (known before the war as ul. Organizacji WiN) was a busy ghetto "arterial road" with several institutions of significance to ghetto life. Oskar Singer, one of the chroniclers of the ghetto, referred to it as the "heart" of the ghetto district. The number of people who could have access to the rooms was considerably high - as was the case in the post-war period.

Currently, this building is displayed at the Radegast Station Branch, embodying the thousands of stories behind each of the victims deported to the Holocaust.
The conservation of the object was performed in the Monuments Conservation Studio of Mirosław Maciaszczyk.

The text was written as part of the grant "Preservation of the Schwarz family chest" awarded by the Jewish Historical Institute in Poland.

I extend my sincere gratitude to Ursula Schwarz and Wolfgang Schellenbacher of the Dokumentationsarchiv des österreichischen Widerstandes (DÖW) and Adam Sitarek of the Centre for Jewish Research at the University of Łódź for their assistance in the preliminary research.

Photos of the chest: Mirosław Maciaszczyk
Photos of shoes and hangers: Mateusz Kowalski
The gathering of materials and work on the publication took almost six years. Piotr Cywiński analysed over 250 books with memoirs of survivors of the German Nazi Auschwitz camp and extensive hitherto unpublished archival material containing their accounts. On this basis, he presented an in-depth reflection on the condition of humans subjected to the concentration camp process.

The subject of his reflection became the emotions and inner dilemmas of the people incarcerated in the camp and the defence strategies that helped them survive. The diversity of issues he highlighted during conversations with survivors and the analysis of their memories and accounts is striking - said Jadwiga Pinderska-Lech, head of the Museum Publishing House.

The book is divided into more than thirty chapters, each devoted to a separate subject. They include, among others, “Initial Shock,” “Solitude,” “Death,” “Hunger,” “Companionship,” “Empathy,” “Decency,” “Struggle and Resistance,” “Culture and Science,” “Fear,” and “Hope.” One great asset of the book is the extremely aptly chosen quotations from nearly 450 Auschwitz survivors.

In the preface to the book, Piotr Cywiński wrote: “What did people live on in the camp? What were the thoughts in their head and heart? What did they dream about? What and how frightened were they? Where did they seek hope? What were their desires? Did they feel lonely in the crowd, or did they seek to rebuild any social ties? What caused their apathy and stupefaction? How did the disappearance of reactions to all cultural stimuli unfold, and how did the deepest reflexes, known as primary reflexes, manifest themselves? How did the interpersonal hierarchy develop in such a community, built anew and based on completely new rules? What about decency and a sense of justice? Was there room in Auschwitz for the development of spiritual values? What was an escape, a burden and a dream? What truth about humanity did the prisoners experience?”

“In post-war historiography, the history of Auschwitz is most often presented through the prism of facts, figures and dates. The establishment of these required several decades of analysis of the scarce archival resources and sometimes very painstaking historical research. It is undoubtedly a major achievement of several generations of historians. I do not intend to disavow this fact at all. It’s important, perhaps even fundamental in some ways, to know what happened and when, particularly in relation to that section of human history that has been and continues to be denied and misrepresented. However, Auschwitz cannot be fully expressed in dates, numbers, and facts. The history of Auschwitz is above all an enormous human tragedy, the individual dimension of which eludes
chronology and goes on with its dramatic life alongside large numbers, important dates, and historical facts,” - it states

‘Each chapter of the book can be treated as an independent analysis of a single issue. However, it is only when read as a whole does it provide an overview of the complicated emotional world of people uprooted from their daily lives and thrown into a world that one of the prisoners called the heart of hell,’ added Jadwiga Pinderska-Lech.

‘I am incredibly impressed; it’s all in plain sight, as if you were there with me, Piotr. I read over a hundred pages, and everything around me seemed to cease to exist besides the Camp. You have broadened my memories and images with an orderly explanation of the incomprehensible, chaotic reality of fear and the struggle for every moment of life, in the constant encounter with death I was so deeply trapped in and grew up with from the age of 14 to 16,’ said Auschwitz survivor Halina Birenbaum.

‘An extraordinary, new monograph on the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp written from the perspective of the prisoners’ diverse experiences. It talks about suffering, loneliness, hunger and death, decency, empathy or the inner life. Piotr Cywiński has used hundreds of accounts by former prisoners to give us a complex, fascinating, and uniquely credible picture of the experience of people from many European countries that were subjected to this “hell on earth,” said Prof. Barbara Engelking, head of the Holocaust Research Center at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

‘It is groundbreaking work. No one has ever looked at the camp this way, and no one has ever described it in such a manner. By delving into the deepest experiences of former prisoners and survivors, Piotr Cywiński reaches almost to the very core of darkness. The book urges us to rethink many notions we have held up to date, starting with education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust’ said editor Marek Zająć, chairman of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation Board.

Concluding the last chapter of the book “Auschwitz. Monograph of the Human” entitled “Conclusions”, Piotr Cywiński wrote: “I hope that my attempt to restore the perspective that the survivors spoke of, which we have not been able to perceive fully, will do my duty to their words, memories and warnings. I also trust that it will fulfil its role as a proposal for a new approach in the historiography of concentration camps and extermination centres, and perhaps other genocide studies - so that human experience, examined in the polyphony of memoir voices, becomes the full focus of researchers of the issue. We do not owe it to them but ourselves. And to subsequent generations. It was an experience too important, acute and deadly to be encapsulated in numbers, dates and facts. Analysis requires more important, much more relevant issues beyond these - strictly factual findings.”

The book “Auschwitz. Monograph of the Human” by Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, is available in Polish on the Museum’s online bookshop and at the Memorial Site. The English translation should be published by the beginning of 2022.
In your opinion, does “Auschwitz. Monograph of the Human” differ from other books analysing the fate of prisoners of the Auschwitz camp?

It is a ground breaking and unique publication. The accounts of former prisoners and Holocaust Survivors are and will of course constitute the crucial point of reference. But no one has ever perceived these accounts from such a pioneering perspective as Piotr Cywiński. I always repeat it: we will never be able to finally understand the experience of Witnesses and we will never touch the very heart of darkness called Auschwitz. I have not changed my mind. However, I have never thought that it is possible to come so close to these areas which are not fully reachable.

For Cywiński, the accounts of former prisoners and Holocaust Survivors are the compass in the journey deep inside human experience. To the depths and pits of humanity. But at the same time it is not a philosophy book in a sense that it is and confusing and lost in abstract deliberations. The author does not move away the cruel concrete of Auschwitz even for a while. From the very beginning until the end of this monumental publication we remain at the camp, experiencing this place in a nearly physical way. Where has this unique effect come from? Firstly, Cywiński has devoted his life to Auschwitz. His mind and his spirit. His time, sensitivity and talent. Secondly, while writing about psychological mechanisms, often going beyond the border of consciousness and unconsciousness, he has never ceased to be a historian.

The book is very particular in its form. It consists not only of the fragments of memoirs and accounts, but also includes a very specific and analytical narration of the author-narrator. This book, for many different reasons, is addressed both to those involved in historical studies professionally as well as to average readers. It seems that everyone perceives this book in a little bit different way, don’t they?

This book is a must-read for all those who would like to come closer to Auschwitz. Irrespective of their motivations. For those who not only want to learn something, but in particular – to understand. It is a rare case of a book with highest analytical and research qualities, at the same time readily devoured by non-professionals in the field. It is the first synthetic attempt to answer the question asked by nearly all visitors of former camp premises. What made it possible for those few to survive? What did they feel? How did they perceive justice? Why, in spite of it all, were they able to love and to laugh? What were they dreaming of? What did they use to think about the world behind the wires? What would finally break them and what would give them power?

When it comes to experts, historians are not the only addressees. This book has to inaugurate a big international debate on the essence and methods for teaching about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, as Cywiński’s analysis is like moving a railroad switch. It is the eye-opening experience that forces the reader to rethink many issues which have been treated as inviolable for years. For example, it has so far been commonly claimed that through the lens of Auschwitz we can show a human in so called extreme or borderline situations. It has had a great effect on educational efforts all over the world and constituted one of the pillars of teaching about the Holocaust. Cywiński in turn proves that this assumption is wrong to its core.
assumption is wrong to its core. That Auschwitz shows the human who is not facing extreme situations, but remains within the world programmed for total dehumanization. This totally changes the perspective. So, let me explain it as follows: if we do not face this book, do not discuss it honestly and do not draw practical conclusions, we will commit the fatal sin of neglect.

Which of the chapters have moved you the most? Has anything surprised you?

A hard question. This book really needs to be read as a whole. Each chapter constitutes a closed story, but they all form a panoramic view. Cywiński’s analysis is like a mosaic: every single component impresses, but only by taking a step back and admiring the entire intricate arrangement one can see the image of Auschwitz. Once again: the image so close to reality that the camp becomes nearly tangible and possible to experience with one’s senses. What is more, the structure of the book is so elaborate also thanks to its carefully thought-out order of chapters. Cywiński is consciously guiding the reader through the maze of Auschwitz.

If I had to choose one chapter, I would point to the one devoted to becoming a Muselmann, a prisoner experiencing the state of extreme exhaustion and numbness. The last stage of life without life. It is the subject that, if it can be said so, has been fascinating and absorbing me for years. But while reading I was surprised how many accounts Cywiński managed to pick out. How many new things I have learned from these fifteen pages. And most of all: how much more I have understood. All in all, after this chapter there comes the next one... about strong will. And this is what it is all about: Cywiński juxtaposes two extremely different situations and makes prisoners’ accounts even more meaningful.

For the reasons that Cywiński mentions in the introduction, “Auschwitz. Monograph of the Human” is not a complete book, for example due to wide linguistic range of the accounts. Do you have any advice for the author? On one hand the book can be considered a complete work, while on the other – just its beginning.

Auschwitz and the Holocaust need to remain the open and unhealed wound forever. As I have already said: this story will never come to its end as we will always be only approaching the heart of darkness. But the entire meaning is in fact hidden in this effort of constantly coming closer. It was claimed for years that everything had been said about Auschwitz. Piotr Cywiński has just changed the rules of the game. He showed the new direction. He did it to himself and to the other. It is now our common responsibility, and I am not afraid to say so, to follow him.
The Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (The Claims Conference) provides grant funds to European universities for the purposes of teaching Holocaust courses for one year and is currently seeking universities that are interested in creating a partnership for the 2022-2023 academic year.

In order to be eligible for this round, the university must:

- be Eastern European based and well established
- be a public (government supported) university
- have an established History or other Humanities related department
- be offering no more than 1 Holocaust course currently throughout the university
- be able to accept funds from the Claims Conference to pay the chosen lecturer directly (the Claims Conference will not pay the lecturer).

The Claims Conference will offer a maximum (gross) amount of $25,000 to:

1. create a new full-time lecturer position to start in September of 2022 and end in June of 2023. The lecturer will be expected to teach at least 3 Holocaust courses per semester in the university, including one course that must be an Introduction to Holocaust. The courses should be taught in the language that the majority of students understand. The lecturer must also offer 4 seminars open to the public, with the support of the university. The university will not be able to add to the lecturer’s responsibilities beyond those related to teaching these courses unless the university offers the lecturer a stipend.

OR

2. combine the above Holocaust teaching position with an already existing lecturer position at your university, to teach a maximum of 3 courses per semester.

The lecturer and the curricula must be approved by the university and the Claims Conference.

Application deadline for University Partnership in Holocaust Studies: November 12, 2021.

If interested or if you have any questions, please email Ms. Chavie Brumer at Chavie.brumer@claimscon.org indicating your intent to apply.

All applications must be completed online through the Fluxx Portal System, along with your CV, the CVs of any recommended lecturers, a signed letter from your department head or provost, as well as your university’s Academic Freedom Policy.
To apply, go to: https://claimsconference.fluxx.io/.

Please begin the application process at least a week before the deadline in order to ensure that all steps in Fluxx are completed on time. For more information about the application process, go to:

http://www.claimscon.org/what-we-do/allocations/red/education/university-partnership/

If your university is re-applying, you do not need to complete a new application. You are only required to add an updated signed letter from your university that indicates approval of the application.
Despite their exhaustion, prisoners tried to create substitutes for social, cultural and sports life. Although sport was not a common and generally accessible phenomenon in Auschwitz, and the opportunity to participate in the competition was available only to a small number of prisoners, whose condition allowed for additional energy expenditure related to physical effort, many post-war reports raise this topic, pointing to the important role of sport as a factor supporting survival. A pathological form of sport is also often mentioned - exercises performed on command, which resulted in the death of many prisoners.

**Pseudosport**

The concept of “sport” in KL Auschwitz was distorted by using this term to refer to massively exhausting exercises combined with drills and singing. This form of sport, referred to as pseudosport or quasi-sport after the war, was usually a means of enforcing discipline and punishing prisoners. Sometimes pseudosport was used as a form of deliberate degradation and physical exhaustion of entire groups of prisoners, work commandos or individuals. This form of physical exercise was known to almost all female and male prisoners. Even children were abused in this way.

Pseudosport usually consisted of relatively simple gymnastic exercises, however repeated many times and for many hours, also in extremely unfavourable weather conditions, in rain, frost or heat. They were often accompanied by harassment, curses and beatings by prisoner functionaries and SS men.

The exhibition presents accounts of former prisoners in which they describe their own experiences with this form of persecution, combined with artistic works illustrating some of the exercises making up pseudosport.

**Athletes**

Almost all prisoners of the camp experienced pseudosport, including athletes, who were also deported to Auschwitz. They were people of various nationalities, practicing many sports, whose sports careers - including the Olympic ones - were interrupted and postponed due to the war. In many cases, the war completely destroyed their life and sports plans.

Among them there were Polish athletes, before the war largely associated in sports clubs and associations. The activity of these organizations, perceived by the occupant as a hotbed of patriotism, was significantly limited, and in many cases even banned. Many sports activists and athletes joined the underground and the resistance movement; some were sent to concentration camps, including Auschwitz. Wannsee Conference in January 1942 resulted in the deportation of Jews, including athletes, to extermination camps. In Auschwitz, only a few - considered fit for work - became prisoners. Most were murdered in gas chambers. The names of many of them are unknown.

Sports representatives were also among the Roma and Sinti, Soviet prisoners of war, as well as among prisoners of other social groups deported to Auschwitz from many European countries. Regardless of why they ended up in Auschwitz, only a small part of them had the opportunity to actively pursue their disciplines behind the wired fence.

**Sport**

Sports life in Auschwitz did not begin with the deportation of the first prisoners, but developed...
A drawing made in 1945 by Jan Kupiec, prisoner number 790, showing a prisoner performing one of the most common exercises as punishment: squats (Kniebeugen). PMA-B Collections.

slowly. It was influenced by the general situation in the camp, the physical condition of prisoners and the consent of the SS staff. Initially, the initiators of sports competitions and fights were privileged German prisoner functionaries who, in order to make the duels fought against each other more attractive, allowed other prisoners to participate in them. The observers of such fights that took place most often on Sunday afternoons were prisoners, but some matches were also attended by SS men who treated participation in such events as an interesting spectacle and distraction.

The most popular disciplines practiced in the camp were football and boxing, but wrestling, volleyball and basketball, and even athletics and water sports, such as swimming, water polo and diving, were also practiced. Certain disciplines were practiced over a long period of time and in many parts of the camp complex (boxing, football), and some were practiced only briefly or only in some sub-camps. Despite this, prisoners remember matches and duels that not only diversified camp life, but also had a great impact on their psyche. At the exhibition, you will be able to see photos of camp plans where major places where various disciplines were practiced are marked, read selected reports describing sports matches and duels, and learn about the profiles of outstanding representatives of each discipline.

Much attention at the exhibition was devoted to one of the groups of athletes who did not have a chance to practice their discipline in the camp: skiers. Many Poles tried to get out of the occupied territories to fight in military units established in France. In the illegal crossing of the southern border they were helped by the so-called couriers: skiers and mountaineers, highlanders who knew the area and had the appropriate skills. Couriers also helped in smuggling documents, money and even weapons. Many of them were captured and imprisoned in Auschwitz after brutal investigations. The traditional artistic skills of highlanders were used by employing them in carpentry workshops and the camp museum
Lagermuseum, where they made utility items and artistic works: paintings, sculptures, and bas-reliefs. The exhibition will present selected artistic works from the PMA-B Collections, as well as camp letters, decorated by prisoners with motifs referring to sports and highlander themes.

The exhibition also includes mental activities, such as chess or bridge, which were treated by prisoners more as a springboard from the brutal reality of the camp and an opportunity to spend their free time in an attractive way other than sports rivalry. Since it was a formally forbidden activity, it was played in hardly visible places, such as overhead bunks or cellars. The items necessary for the games were most often illegally manufactured by prisoners themselves. Undoubtedly some of the accessories for games - not only mental disciplines, but others, too - were illegally brought to the camp from the luggage stolen from Jewish victims.

New acquisitions of the Museum
A special place at the exhibition was devoted to two boxers: Antoni “Kajtek” Czortek and Tadeusz “Teddy” Pietrzykowski. Thanks to the generosity of the families of both athletes, the Museum Archives acquired original secret messages and camp letters of former prisoners, which will be presented to a wide audience for the first time at the exhibition.

Tadeusz Pietrzykowski, a pre-war Warsaw boxer, was the first political prisoner to cross gloves with a German prisoner functionary. This fight initiated a whole series of boxing duels both in Auschwitz I and in many sub-camps. For almost three years in the camp, he fought over 40 duels and was second to none among other prisoners. He became the informal champion of all weights in KL Auschwitz. He informed his mother about this in a secret message sent from the camp in 1942.

The exhibition presents his boxing glove, donated to the Museum Collections by his daughter, Eleonora Szafran. He got it just before his transfer from Auschwitz to Neuengamme and he fought wearing it both in Neuengamme and after liberation, as a soldier of the Division of General Maczek.

Antoni Czortek’s camp letters to his wife are unique memorabilia which will be presented at the exhibition for the first time – they are not only camp memorabilia, but also family memorabilia. They have been donated by Antoni Czortek’s son, Bogdan. As he emphasizes, these are the only memorabilia from the camp times in the family collection and unique documents. His father, forced into boxing fights in Birkenau, also with his pre-war friend and colleague from the rings, Zbigniew Malecki, reluctantly recalled the time of the camp ordeal, and his boxing career, both pre-war and post-war, is still awaiting a historical study.

Sport in the shadow of extermination
Everything that happened in Auschwitz happened in the shadow of extermination and always in connection with it. Also sport. It is best illustrated in a fragment of a short story by a Polish political prisoner Tadeusz Borowski, included in his post-war memoirs. The story “Ludzie, którzy szli” (The People Who Walked On) describes one of the football games in Auschwitz II-Birkenau in which he participated as a goalkeeper. The location of
games in Auschwitz II-Birkenau in which he participated as a goalkeeper. The location of the football field in Birkenau was bizarre: it was built right next to the ramp, to which transports of people were brought, and near crematorium number III.

“I stood as a goalkeeper once. It was a Sunday. (...) I stood as a goalkeeper – with my back to the ramp. The ball fell out of bounds and rolled up to the fence. I ran after it. Lifting it off the ground, I looked at the ramp. A train had just arrived at the ramp. People started to get out of the freight wagons and walked towards the woods. (...) The procession continued slowly, and new people from the wagons were constantly joining it. Finally it stopped. People sat down on the grass and looked at us. I came back with the ball and kicked it to restart the game. It went from one foot to another and arched back to my goal. I kicked it out to the corner. It rolled into the grass. I went for it again. And lifting it from the ground, I stood still: the ramp was empty.

There was not a single man left on it ... I came back with the ball and kicked it to the other corner. Three thousand people were gassed between the two corners behind my back.”


**Summary**
The exhibition “Sport and athletes in KL Auschwitz” has been prepared mainly on the basis of the archive materials and collections of Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau. It can be viewed in block 21 at the former Auschwitz camp until March 31, 2022.

Exhibition curator: Renata Koszyk
Design: Aleksandra Mausolf
Coordination: Zuzanna Janusik
Consultation: Dr. Wanda Witek-
Monitoring Access to Holocaust Collections Project follows up on the IHRA’s efforts to safeguard the record of the Holocaust
This current project builds upon the findings of the IHRA’s Archival Access Project of 2014–2017. One outcome of this project was the adoption of the IHRA’s working definition of Holocaust-related materials. This definition has served as an important tool, helping archivists around the world to work towards opening their archives and providing full access to vital documentation.

The project also follows up on the pledges made as part of the 2020 IHRA Ministerial Declaration, in which IHRA Member Countries emphasized “the importance of identifying, preserving, and making available archival material, testimonies and authentic sites for educational purposes, commemoration and research.”

Despite great progress, the Monitoring Access Project has noted that many archives around the world still find it challenging to identify which materials are in fact related to the period of the Holocaust. These new guidelines, which the IHRA hopes to finalize this year, are intended to resolve this confusion and to enable archivists, researchers, and anyone interested in archival material to gain access to Holocaust-related materials.

Cooperation with archival institutes is central to the project’s approach
Crucial to the success of this ongoing project is continued cooperation with and outreach to archival institutes. The project members have been able to gain valuable insight while speaking with practitioners in the field. They aim to continue this approach in the coming year as they share their draft document for feedback and input.

Most recently, the project team met with EUDiA, the European Union Diplomatic Archives, where the Project Chair and Deputy Chair presented the draft guidelines and explored future opportunities for cooperation. At this meeting, Deputy Chair Veerle Vanden Daelen voiced: “We are making a plea to archivists and curators to understand the ambiguity and diversity of Holocaust-related sources. Experts should work hand-in-hand to allow access to documentation and support quality research.”

For more information about the importance of open access to archives, read this interview with Project Chair Dr. Gertner.
“We, as a nation, must openly admit that our past was not always glorious,” he said, as he explained the “unimaginable suffering, cruelty and savagery” inflicted on Jews on the orders of pro-Nazi marshal Ion Antonescu.

Romanian Prime Minister Florin Citu has gone further than any predecessor by paying tribute to thousands of Jews killed in a 1941 pogrom in the north-eastern city of Iași.

Leaders of the central European state have a long history of denying Romanian connivance in the Holocaust, but Citu broke with tradition during an unprecedented meeting of parliament, in the presence of the massacre’s last survivors.

Around 15,000 people, almost a third of the city’s Jewish population, were killed on 29 June 1941. They were taken to the Iași police headquarters, where they were beaten and humiliated by local officers and civilians before being shot by armed troops.

Up to 8,000 survivors were herded into two sealed and overheated freight trains, where thousands more died of suffocation. Up to 100 pictures of the massacre survive, and the pogrom has been meticulously researched, including by a commission led by the late Romanian-born Nobel Peace laureate Elie Wiesel.

Antonescu, who was executed for war crimes in 1946, remains a hero to many Romanians, a point picked up on this week by Silviu Vexler, head of Romania’s Jewish community, who lamented the country’s “praise for war criminals”.

Government representative Alexandru Muraru said: “By commemorating this massacre, the worst in modern Romanian history, the parliament is laying the foundations for a truth-based reconciliation.”

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YAD VASHEM MARKS THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE OLYMPICS WITH TWO ONLINE EXHIBITIONS

COMMENORATING JEWISH AND NON-JEWISH ATHLETES

Gymnast Estella Agsteribbe was one of five Jewish women to participate in the Olympic Games in Amsterdam in 1928. She was a trailblazer not only as Jewish athlete, but also as one of the first women permitted to compete in gymnastics at the global sports event. In September 1943, Estella and her two children were murdered shortly after arriving at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp—simply because they were Jewish.

In the spirit of the upcoming Olympic Games set to open tomorrow in Tokyo, Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, is promoting two online exhibitions to commemorate both Jewish and non-Jewish athletes during WWII. The first exhibition, entitled "Jews and Sports before the Holocaust: A Visual Retrospective," utilizes images and artifacts to portray different sporting events and competitions in which Jews participated. This exhibition features the personal stories and images of Jewish athletes before the Holocaust, including champion boxer Victor Perez, the Hapoel Football team from Poland, and the Hakoach Vienna Hockey team competing at the Bar-Kochba International Sports Games in 1937.

"The Jewish athletes who are making their way to Tokyo to participate in the Olympic Games, which were delayed from summer 2020 to now due to the global health pandemic, are only the latest in a long-standing tradition."

Another remarkable story included in this unique exhibition is that of cousins Gustav and Alfred Flatow, who represented Germany at two Olympic Games. "Despite their status as world-class athletes, their Jewish identity condemned them to an all too familiar fate and they, too, were murdered during the Holocaust," Porath reflected.

Sports often served as a bridge between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, resulting in friendships and comradery formed between these two societies. During the Holocaust, some of these bonds would prove beneficial in helping save Jewish athletes, when their non-Jewish counterparts bravely risked their own lives to rescue their Jewish compatriots from Nazi persecution—often at risk to their own lives. The second online exhibition "The Game of their Lives" tells the stories of those brave individuals, non-Jewish athletes recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem. The inspiring accounts of a dozen valiant men and women are highlighted in the exhibition—most notably the rescue stories of world-renowned Italian cyclist champion Gino Bartali, Olympian swimmer Margit Eugénie Mallász, and Czechoslovakian soccer player Martin Uher. These stories truly embody the
responsibility and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles."

"These two unique exhibitions are part of Yad Vashem's ongoing efforts to curate content that is both meaningful and timely," concluded Porath. "At a time when the world's attention is focused on the athletes competing in Tokyo, we are able to share the faces and inspirational stories of Jewish and non-Jewish athletes from the time of the Holocaust."