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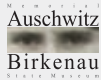
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## EDITORIAL

This issue of the magazine was published in a time difficult for all Poles—during the National Mourning, when it was yet hard to believe in what had happened near Katyn on April

10 and it was even harder to understand and explain it. We should remember to be together in this difficult period, maybe it will help us to get back to normal life and to deal with those ter-

rible and unexpected facts. We can only hope that this situation will make us better and we will be able to use the wave of sadness and emotions that stroke us so heavily to strengthen our-

selves and raise our awareness of life that we can direct only seemingly.

Paweł Sawicki  
Editor-in-chief  
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## A GALLERY OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Today we have a springtime, green and ecological topic! The history of this tree is the history of this tenement building, in whose courtyard it grows, and the history of those who live in this home.

The old, leafy tree... In the spring with its green leaves, full of golden purple in autumn, finally reaching the earth and covering it with a crisp carpet. With seeds, which like little helicopters fall, whirling to the ground. The time about which I write—in other words, long ago—at a low level, just right for a child's eyes and hands, was an opening in the tree

trunk large enough for the small hands of a child. We hid our treasures there: girls—rag dolls, ribbons, and beads. Boys—wires and sticks that could later be used for something, and pocketknives. Someone said that probably because of the magic of the trees and hollows, the items left there overnight—would double!

That from one pocketknife, two, from one doll—two! We checked this magical possibility many times, but in the dampness and wetness of the hollow nothing ever multiplied!

In the courtyard there was a coop with a small number

of useful birds. One of their “generations,” perhaps because of their wild instincts, came to like the branches and limbs of the tree and flew up onto it to sit as if on a perch. This was an interesting and common sight: like a tree in an exotic land populated with a squawking flock of birds.

Today, the tree, though a bit butchered, still stands and grows. The hollow within it has long grown over and has become a part of the trunk. In the spring, as usual, it turns green, and in the autumn it spreads its crunch leaves. And what kind of TREE is this? This is a plush

old MAPLE growing in the courtyard of the building at 23 Jagiello Street. A tree of our childhood games and almost magical fascination. Everything has changed! Not many of the people from that time are still around, the games are over, and the building has changed its function. But the tree—almost immortal—as it was—is still the same! And those children from under the maple umbrella?... I have written about their adult fate, that has been meaningful for the town, more than once! ■

Andrzej Winogrodzki



Strollers on Jagiello Street. Photo from Mirosław Ganobis's collection "A Gallery of the 20th Century"

Photo: www.kasztelania.pl



## NATIONAL TRAGEDY. ETERNAL REST...

On 10 April 2010 in the catastrophic airplane crash in Smolensk, the President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Kaczyński, lost his life. He was flying, leading a nearly one hundred person delegation to commemorate and honor the Polish officers murdered 70 years ago in Katyń. With him, all those aboard the flight were killed: the First Lady, the highest officials of the Polish State, Members of Parliament, bishops and chaplains, generals and officers of the Polish Army, veterans, representatives of Katyń Families and other social organizations, officials of the Government Protection Bureau and the plane's crew.

Many of these people were worthy of merit for Poland. Among them were individuals, whose ties to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum were exceptionally strong. Tomasz Merta, the Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the General Conservator of Antiquities was killed in this catastrophe. A man of exceptional insight, understanding and personal sacrifice for the cause of historical memory and the education of new generations. Also killed was Andrzej Przewoźnik, Secretary of the Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites, a member of our museum Council, who established countless Memorial Sites and monuments to the military and martyrdom in Poland and abroad. The list of victims also includes Father Roman Indrzejczyk, Chaplain of the Polish President, who recited the prayer "Eternal Rest" on 27 January 2010 in Birkenau for the victims of Auschwitz. Among the victims was also Lieutenant Colonel Czesław Cywiński, President of the Association of Armia Krajowa Soldiers, and uncle of the director of our Museum.

To the families and loved ones of the victims we offer our deepest condolences.

*"Eternal rest, grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them."*

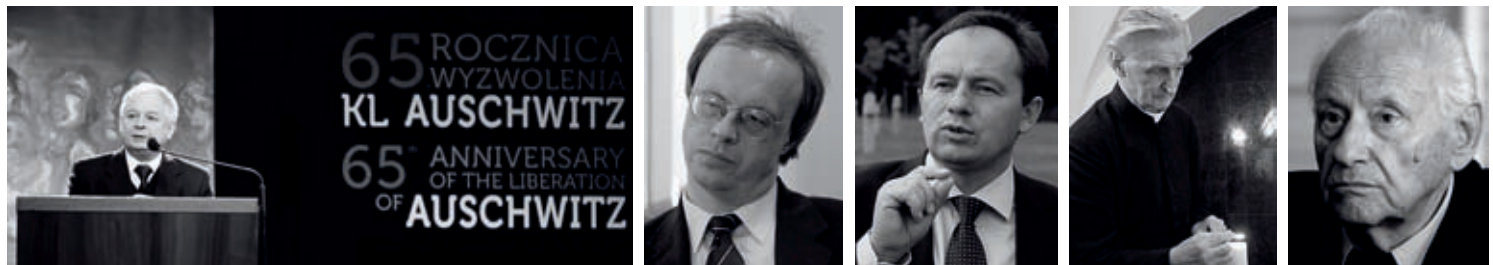


Photo: Chancellery of the President of Poland, PAP, gazeta.pl

## MEETING WITH MIECZYŚLAW KITA

**M**ieczysław Kita—does not look like he is 90 years old—gives the impression of a calm and somewhat humble man. But his book "I was there" describes a brave, contentious, young man who has escaped the greatest oppression because of his ingrained cleverness.

Mieczysław Kita speaks spontaneously, but you can see that he has thought his speech through to maintain the chronology of events. At Auschwitz he was a prisoner for almost three years, worked in various *Kommandos*, and remembers many facts connected to the history of the camp, for example: tearing down houses in the village of Brzezinka, the murder of Jews in the so-called Little Red and White Houses, as well as building of one of the gas chambers in Birkenau. Each of these facts is connected with personal experience: tragedy and victory. To this day, his voice cracks when he speaks about a young Greek, Aaron, much liked in his *Kommando*, who was first sterilized by the Nazis and later murdered. The author of the memoirs entitled "I was there" stresses that he couldn't and watching the scenes that occurred during selection, the children taken from their

parents and sent to the gas. He remembers a Yugoslavian man who struck an SS man and then was shot by him. He becomes emotional when he talks of how a friend shared a potato with him during the evacuation march.

On several occasions Mieczysław Kita pulled himself out of what seemed a hopeless situation thanks to luck and his sense of humor. With a smile, he speaks of a time when he and his friends accidentally dumped a caldron of soup they were carrying to the block, and then Kapo Maruta took the effort to gather the leftovers of soup from other blocks and in this way Mieczysław Kita and his friends "ate like never before," when it seemed like they would not get their helping. It was with Kapo Maruta that Mieczysław Kita had a memorable conversation: "Mr. Kapo, if I survive the camp, and you're going to have your own company,

then I'll work for you as a driver"—"You'd drive me, but straight to St. Peter," answered Kapo Maruta.

From the history he tells, the picture of Mieczysław Kita is that of a strong and relaxed man, resistant against his negative fate, but above all a good and completely compassionate man that accompanied the feeble. When asked what was needed to survive the ordeal of the camp, Mieczysław Kita answered: "health, a strong psyche, and lots of luck."

Mieczysław Kita was born in 1921 in Psary-Podlasy near Kielce. During the Second World War he worked in the underground under the pseudonym "Bystry." In October 1941 he was denounced and arrested for his work as he says himself and, for helping Jews. In November of 1941, he was brought to Auschwitz. In 1943—as an expert builder—he worked for a month and a half in Neuen-

gamme, next he was sent back to Auschwitz from where in October 1944 he was evacuated to Gross-Rosen, in February 1945 he was transferred to Flossenbürg-Hersbruck, and then in April 1945—to Dachau, where he was liberated by the American Army.

For 25 years he has lived with his family in Skarżysko-Kamienna. He is the author of

the memoir entitled "I was there," published by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in 2009.

The meeting with Mieczysław Kita took place on 23 March 2010 at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in connection with a workshop for tour guides. ■

Gabriela Nikliborc  
Publishing Department A-BSM



Photo: jarmen

Mieczysław Kita



## GREAT INTEREST IN THE COMPETITION

**111** participants declared intent to enter the competition for creating an architectural concept for the new Auschwitz Memorial Site visitors' center, which is to be created on the site of PKSiS bus garage neighboring the Museum.

"We are very happy that interest in taking part in the competition is so great. Thanks to that, we will have a chance to choose from an array of truly interesting architectural concepts that while fully functional will correspond to the objectives of the future Visitors' Center," said Jolanta Banaś-Maciaszczyk, Head of the Museum Preservations Department.

The deadline for submitting works for contest passes on 31 May. Three weeks later, the winner will be announced, who will carry out the building project of the planned investment.

The project of building a new visitors' center in PKSiS was endorsed by the International Auschwitz Council and financing is possible thanks to the extraordinary help of the Ministry of Culture. In the

future, there will be a parking and a modern reception for visitors, whose numbers are staying constant and at a very high level. In 2009, 1.3 million people from all over the world visited the Auschwitz Memorial Site.

Moving the Visitors' Center to a new location makes it possible to create a new introductory exhibition in the former camp building, which is currently used as the visitors

reception. Its goal is to provide visitors with necessary knowledge of the history of the 1930s, the rise of Nazism, propaganda and totalitarian system, and finally the break-out of the Second World War and the German policies in the occupied lands of Poland.

"Thanks to this investment, we will be able to provide even better conditions for the thousands of people who come here and learn about one

of the most tragic chapters in all history," said Andrzej Kacorz, manager of the Visitor Services Section.

"I hope that finally all administrative hurdles will disappear, which have blocked the realization of this extremely important project, important locally because the new center means more jobs and a place for local companies to function," added Kacorz. ■

## DIGITAL REPOSITORY OF THE AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU MUSEUM



Photo: A-BSM

New equipment in the Museum's repository

**S**ince 1991, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum has had a database of source material about the victims of the camps. The repository's work is based on original SS documents. Unfortunately, the Museum Archive only has about 10% of the original documents. The rest had been destroyed by the Germans before they fled the camp. A list of all those deported to the camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau will probably never be possible. However, the repository is not only the source of valuable historical information, but also a memorial of remembrance to those who tragically had their fate tied to that of the Auschwitz camp.

Currently, the repository has collected around 650 thousand registrations and 170 thousand documents scanned, based on 70 collections of documents from the time the camp functioned. Thousands of documents and tens of thousands of names of those deported to Auschwitz are still to be added to the database.

The repository is not only to store and save the documents, but also to allow access to their data. That is why we are expanding and building a professional system for the long-term storage of digital data. This is part of the "Digitization of and access to the archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum" project, done in the framework of the "Cultural heritage / Creation of digital cultural heritage" program of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for 2009.

In the first phase of the project, two servers, system

of disks, and tape library with the proper software were purchased. The cost of the equipment was covered by the funds for MKDiN that come from the Fund for the Promotion of Culture and the Victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Foundation. The system is set to be built over the span of the next five years. Ultimately, the entire database will include digital images of documents and objects from the Archives and Museum Collections. Thanks to this, we will be able to reach historical information about people, but also about the items and buildings with which they were connected. Thanks to this system, electronic copies of documents will be available about those deported, scans of photographs, plans and maps, which will help to establish the fate of certain individuals. ■

Krzysztof Antończyk  
Digital Depository  
A-BSM



# THE WORLD CAN BE BETTER

The text below was written by former prisoner Tadeusz Sobolewicz and sent to the editors of *Oś*. These are his reflections and views from meetings that had taken place with German youth.

When I come to meetings with German youth—young boys and girls—I ask myself the question—WHY have they come to Auschwitz, what interests them, what do they want to find out—after examining the exhibited documents—from me, former prisoner, a human who returned, lived through the hell of six camps and the mire of human misery and, at the same time, human barbarity.

However, if they want, then you must give them testimony about what really happened in the concentration camp. So I ask: do you really want to know the whole truth—about the inhuman behavior of people from your country who wore hats with the death's head?

They always say "yes." Never has it happened that they have said, "No, we don't want to listen." So I start to speak: about the attack by the Nazi armies on Poland in September 1939, about the rape and terror against the

Polish and Jewish people. I speak further about how I became a soldier, who summoned by my father worked in the underground and fought against the violence of the Nazi criminals in the independent organization Union of Armed Struggle (Związek Walki Zbrojnej).

They listen. Carefully, they listen—concentrated and in suspense. On some faces I see at first disbelief, and later shock. In some eyes I notice shame and embarrassment. I tell them facts about the sadistic behavior of the SS men, about the cynicism of some German masters, supervisors of tortured prisoners. I also talk about Germans who had the courage to help prisoners—because there were those, but not many. I tell them about my tragic situation in the basement sleeping quarters, when during an uprising by Russian prisoners a fire broke out and together with others I searched for help. When I illustrate how

I—burned and moaning in pain—was hit by an SS man in the head with a club and lost consciousness, and then how my body was dragged over the dirty ground—I notice tears in many of the listeners' eyes.

I continue, telling them about mutual help and solidarity of fellow prisoners (thanks to some of whom I survived), about the heroic sacrifice of Father Maximilian Kolbe, about the German nurse Maria Stromberger who helped members of the camp organization in passing information to partisan units around Auschwitz and brought medicine from them to the sick in the camp hospital—I see in the eyes of the listeners relief: so, in this hell there were not only criminals.

In the last phase of the meeting I tell them about my escape from the evacuation march—the so-called Death March—about Bavarian, German women, who fed us, escapees, and allowed

us to hide in their homes. The meeting ends with the words "No More War." Those gathered do not get up right away, as if they are still experiencing the fragments they heard about the fate of a witness of history. After a moment they hit the table with their hands or they clap. For me this gesture is not only a thank you, but also the expression of emotions and acceptance of the speaker, who is still alive... and carries no hatred.

Often, some come to me after the meeting and ask about faith in God, if I have a number on my arm, about my mother, if she survived imprisonment in the Ravensbrück camp, if I met my tormentors after the war, and finally, if I received compensation...

Is it possible to receive "compensation" for a stolen, contaminated youth in the camp? They squeeze my hands, apologize with tear-filled eyes—convincing me

that this cannot be repeated, that it was good that they could confront their difficult historical past at Auschwitz. For some, it is difficult to believe. They ask: "Sir, you really don't carry in you any hatred toward Germans?" I answer: "If it had been different, I would not have accepted your invitation to meet. Believe in what I have told you. Put effort in your new, future world and live so that it is better than when you arrived. Much depends on you—you have to convince and teach others when there won't be any more of those like me... This is your task—build a world without hatred. Look everywhere for tolerance and compromise so that you shield people from total catastrophe. The world can be better, but this depends on people themselves—especially now, in the united Europe. ■"

*Tadeusz Sobolewicz  
former Auschwitz prisoner,  
camp number 23053*



Photo: IYMC

Opening of the exhibition ending Polish-German seminar "Tadeusz Sobolewicz—biography as an argument"



## FOR IGOREK

In the last edition of *Oś* we wrote about the 32nd Krakow Poetry Salon, dedicated to fighting Igor Bartosz's cancer. Below are a few words about two other cultural events that the IYMC "organized" as part of the Small Orchestra of Great Charity for Igorek.

### Winnie the Pooh and the Others

In the afternoon of Sunday March 14, in cooperation with the Oświęcim Culture Center (OCK) and the Ludwik Solski Academy for the Dramatic Arts in Krakow (PWST) we invited families to watch the play "Winnie the Pooh and the Others" put on by the second year acting students of the PWST, prepared and under the care of Ewa Kaim. Performing on the stage of the OCK were: Małgorzata Gorol, Martyna Krzysztolik, Kamila Kuboth, Kasia Dorosińska, Janek

Jurkowski, Łukasz Stawarczyk, Bartek Gelner, Marek Hucz, Wojciech Sikora, Mateusz Trembaczowski, and Sylwester Piechura. Playing the piano was Dawid Rudnicki. The children and parents enjoyed the happy songs and playful scenes by the young actors. The audience clapped and laughed often. At the end the applause, amplified joyfully by the children, who were showered by colorful balloons thrown from the stage by Winnie the Pooh, Christopher, Piglet, Tigger, and friends, was fully deserved. Not only because of the great acting, but

also for all the other creators of "Winnie the Pooh," who worked in Oświęcim free of charge to support Igorek Bartosz's fight with cancer. Igorek—with his parents, older brother, and grandmother watched the play from a balcony in the hall and he liked it very much. Before the play, Rotary Club Oświęcim held a public collection for treating Igorek. As a result, almost 2,200 PLN was collected.

### Ula Dudziak at the IYMC

On the evening of Monday March 22 at the IYMC, sang Ula Dudziak. Sang—is



Urszula Dudziak

Photo: Tomasz Mól



"Winnie the Pooh and the Others"

**GRZEGORZ TURNAU**

dla Igorka Bartosza

**CICHO-SZAI**

Wrzucając do puszeki

**22 zł**

(lub więcej...)

znajdziesz się z **GRZEGORZEM TURNAUEM** na Brackiej...

...i nie tylko...

**22.04.2010 r. godz. 18.00**

**PSM w Oświęcimiu, ul. Wysokie Brzegi**

MAŁA ORKIESTRA WALKING POMOĆ

POCZĄS KONCERTU PRZEPROWADZONA ZOSTANIE ZBIÓRKA PIENIĘŻNA NA LECZENIE IGORKA BARTOSZA

Organizatorzy: Międzynarodowy Dom Społeczności w Oświęcimiu, Państwowa Szkoła Muzyczna im. Karola Szymanowskiego w Oświęcimiu

w wejście na koncert: od godz. 17.30

probably a bit of an understatement. The artist not only shared her phenomenal voice with the tightly packed audience in the forum hall at the IYMC but she also allowed a peak into her secret workshop. The presentation "from the kitchen" showed the possibilities of her magical suitcase, thanks to which incredible sounds characteristic of the vocalist are created and she told colorful and funny stories about life in New York City, famous people, her international career, but also anecdotes one might say—everyday, ordinary, that could happen to all of us.

The concert at the IYMC was dedicated to Igorek. During a collection of donations for Igorek's treatment and rehabilitation by Rotary Club Oświęcim, the public gave over 6,300 PLN, half of it thanks to the help of wonderful artists: Kalina Dulko, Józef Hołard, Janusz Karbowniczek, Halina Koziol, Elżbieta Kuraj, Adam Pocięcha, Waldemar Rudyk, and Paweł Warchol. The works they offered as prizes were for those who gave the largest donations for Igorek.

That evening at the IYMC was ailing Igorek's mother, Monika. She spoke to Ula Dudziak, who wrote the little boy a dedication on her record. Next—instead of a review—are a few words written by Monika, which appeared on the blog about Igorek [www.igorbartosz.blogspot.com](http://www.igorbartosz.blogspot.com). ■

Joanna Klęczar

### ...A MAGICAL EVENING

*I just returned from IYMC. From Ula Dudziak' concert... My face glowing. It was an incredibly magical evening. Wonderful people, a wonderfully powerful artist, emanating an unbelievable aura around herself. A fulfilled woman? Happy? With a huge sense of humor? Who loves people and life? I think that above all a woman who accepts herself and even with the passing of time (which she speaks of unashamed and, in fact, doesn't look her age) she is still a girl... A crazy giddy girl with dreams...*

*...I won't forget Ula's words, which she said during the concert. She told the audience that since she was sixteen years old she has been writing a diary. Now she is working on an autobiography, so she must return to it and read carefully. On one of the first pages she found a picture: a vocalist at the microphone and behind her the silhouettes of band members. CAPTION: "Ula, great jazz artist." And later an addition: "Some time later, when you'll be famous and admired, you'll look at this page and then you'll be convinced that EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE."*

*Everything is possible! If you truly desire it! Ula, Leszek, IYMC, Marcin, Friends—thank you for this evening.*





# HUMAN RIGHTS AND NATIONAL SOCIALIST PROPAGANDA —CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, THEN AND NOW

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 was a response to historical injustices that had taken place during the Second World War. Stéphane Hessel, one of the authors of the Declaration, wrote about its meaning in 1998: *When the war ended, we thought: Either the world will soon end, or something new will come about. And what was new in this? It was victory of a new vision of people and society. Enacting human rights.*

In light of these words, after almost 60 years after this document was enacted, it is essential to educate the young generation about human rights based on specific events taken from history. Looking deep into history shows how important it is to teach about human rights, for democracy, human dignity, and peace. The education department staff of the IYMC have created training project for study groups in the framework of the project "Remember about Auschwitz: Human Rights in Today's World." One proposition is a workshop entitled, "Human Rights and National Socialist Propaganda—Crimes Against Humanity, Then and Now." The idea behind this workshop is to get to know, through a multimedia presentation, the methods and elements of propaganda

created by the Nazis in the Third Reich. The concept of the presentation is based on, among others, showing posters and analyzing fragments of documentary films, which allows a true showing to the historical and social background of the events of those times. During the workshop, young people have three topics to choose from for group work: "Education of youth in the Third Reich," "The role of the press in the life of German society," "Political parties in posters in 1932." Educational materials for each group are properly chosen posters, texts, as well as appropriate articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and questions to guide discussions. Connecting historical issues with the modern works serves awakening interest in the participants of the

workshops, and thanks to that, it allows for a more in-depth look at current phenomena in society. Awareness of the issues affecting society is another important point of civic education of youth. The subject of propaganda was chosen purposely, to show that propaganda doesn't work in the abstract world of society, but with a firm basis, at a particular time and place, and certain historical, social, political, and economic alignments. The effects of propaganda are therefore connected with other factors that shape the behavior of society, such as: administrative, economic, and moral coercion. This is exactly how propaganda functioned in the time of National Socialism—breaking all rights of individuals and national groups in social, cultural, and political life.

## QUOTES OF GROUP CHAPERONES:

"The workshop described the political and propaganda workings of the Third Reich well, presented the anti-humanitarian views that led to the Shoah. Interspersed throughout with film fragments, presentations, and interesting posters. The educator was able to get the students interested and active in cooperation, even though the topic was a difficult one. In this way, the workshop enriched the educational program." Volker Neupert  
"Convincing, well-structured concept of the workshop, which presented the historical context through well-chosen film excerpts and presentation. The materials meant for group work were thematically well prepared." Rosa Linerberg

Disturbing are the words of Robert Ley, editor of the newspaper, "German Labor Front" (Deutsche Arbeitsfront), who already in 1938 wrote: *In Germany there is no privacy. If you are asleep then it is your privacy, but as soon as you wake up and come into contact with someone di-*

*rectly, you must bear in mind that you are a soldier of Adolf Hitler, you are alive and you are trained according to the regulations... We do not have any private individuals. The times in which everyone could do whatever they wanted, are behind us.*

This statement is meant for consideration in what times we want to live and if we agree with what is going on in our modern world. When we look through the internet and see the constant flow of new information, do we have the awareness of political consequences and the breaking of human rights? And so, raising awareness and "opening eyes" to discrimination, human rights abuses, and promotion of the ideology of ruling groups that is happening before our very eyes is very important. It is not enough to know that human rights exist, but that there is a need to work on their behalf. Working on behalf of human rights should be the basis on which young people enter the adult world, so as to change the world and build on "the right to life, freedom, and safety of each person." ■

Ewa Guziak



Photo: IYMC

Youth participating in the workshop

Age of participants: 16-18  
Duration: 2-3 hours  
Led by: Ewa Guziak





# SNAPSHOTS ARE CREATED VIRTUALLY BY THEMSELVES

Until 12 May in the temporary exhibitions hall in Block 12 in Auschwitz I there was a presentation of French photographer Emmanuel Berry's work called *Image Versus Knowledge*. Paweł Sawicki has spoken to the author.



□ Can you tell us about your photographic project? What ideas brought you to Oświęcim?

I came to Oświęcim for the first time in 2007, right after I finished an exhibition in Paris, which consisted of portraits of stuffed birds. I was close to coming a few years earlier when several well-known personalities from my area

organized a trip. However, this never came to be, but I regularly thought about this trip as something needed. It was necessary to find and seize the opportunity. I am the father of three boys and grew up in a family in which my parents and grandparents raised me partially based on their own childhood and traumatic experience during the Second World War.

I have always known that I must go to Oświęcim... so that I could do my own self-reflection and to collect my thoughts. During this trip, there was never any talk of doing any kind of photographic project. I went there like many, except that like the majority of others I was in the "area" for a few days, almost emotionlessly taking walks during coming

spring and in the peace. As always, I had my camera with me.

□ The world you show in work is Oświęcim, but almost none of the photos have the historical context of the concentration camp. What kind of world did you decide to show?

After my return from my visit, I waited a while to develop the films. I was occupied with other work at the time, which completely took over my photographer's mind. When I printed the thumbnails of all pictures, I was amazed once again to find these spaces, a gray, almost neutral green, peaceful and overwhelming at the same time. There weren't any pictures of the camps... during my visit, I didn't feel, or desire, even think to take the pictures this way. So many had been taken at different times, that my imagination was full of pictures and words. In the days that followed my visit to the camps, I wandered around Oświęcim without a destination, not knowing where I am headed. I walked during this time through the new "outside" terrain, not marked by any archeological or

historical footprint. The pictures from *my walk* could have been taken anywhere... this is the power that comes from analyzing their context later.

□ You chose black and white photos. This is a feature of historical documentation, not of the modern world. Why did you decide not to use color?

Black and white photos were the first kind that I have seen and they took me back to my childhood. I remember a book entitled *Dead War*, describing, with the help of mainly documentary photographs, the war in Indochina... this was probably my first introduction to photography. Later, the desire to take and develop photographs meant that I became the owner of my own darkroom for developing black and white pictures. In the 1980s this was very common before the creation and popularization of digital photography. From that time I started to analyze photographs, which mainly in the case of black and white pictures were based on silver nitrate technology. This method of photographing is not to be





underestimated when it comes to the history of this medium and harks back to the time of its creation, this is also why I believe it is the spirit of photography. This is why most of my own private photos, which I take and work with on a daily basis are black and white and taken on 35mm film. The pictures of Oświęcim, were therefore, spontaneously taken on this type of film, even though that during my first visit I still had no definite plans. Generally, color photographs are full of information and realism; the larger their size, this realism takes on more objectivity. I decided to start real, thorough work in the Oświęcim area after I saw those first black and white pictures with a strong desire to research the area and its history, while at the same time examine photography's rules and their modern usage.

- You show a ruined reality, almost devoid of people—the composition seems to be accidental and chaotic. The effect of this is a sad and often depressing mood. Was this done purposely?

Long time ago already, ever since I started photographing, I was probably 13 years old then, I became aware that this creative work is something that is detached as well as personal. The first pictures that I took, still as a child, were created similarly to those from Oświęcim. I took a walk, taking pictures of the area, streets and fields near the house in

which I lived. I hurried in doing only one thing: to once again—thanks to my darkroom—rediscover those emotions, experienced during my strolls full of various discoveries. That area was lively and vivid, however, sometimes it was also gloomy and secretive.

I took many trips to Oświęcim, getting attached to the landscapes of the villages and city that are visible in this area, despite the more than traumatic history that these places witnessed. From the very beginning, I made sure that there were no people in any of the shots, wanting to stay away from a journalistic approach to my work. I tried to concentrate my subject on the surroundings of the place so close to Hell. This is how the pictures were created in various conditions, depending on the season and the weather. This wasn't done to make the pictures banal; conversely, it was done to limit their silhouette, something that photography unconditionally demands. The place asks for seriousness, respect, and humility. Mainly and above all, I wanted my pictures to come as close as possible to a "pause" from exhaling in an almost musical way... I don't know what pushes the photographer to attempt to reach the edge of this, that can be seen; anyway, in my case it was about searching the time when pictures come to be little by little, stubbornly returning to the place that repelled them. Being real, but not frag-

ile, the pictures come to be by themselves. That is my opinion.

- Many of the pictures are abstract compositions of nature. Why?

Without falling into melancholy and sadness as well as with a strong determination to be in a state of utmost readiness during my "marches," I allowed myself to be led by the path and road. Natural light plays a great role in this work. Other than that it brings us life, it brightens the things of this world, for instance Oświęcim, and covers it in a bitter and at the same time sweet cover. That's how I saw it...

I also wanted to give my audience a bit of contrast, constantly pointing out details while remaining an open observer. There was no reason to highlight or dramatize the subject matter, my feelings, or the very pictures for sudden and even obscene framing. Some of the abstract forms, seen from time to time on some photographs, are due to my own state of mind at the time... enriched with elements of pictorial, musical, and photographic culture.

- The exhibition is being shown in the former concentration camp. Does that have a meaning for you?

Generally speaking, I want my pictures to be accepted in the same way as I could have found them in books or in exhibitions and those pictures that made me desire to discover and



document the world. This work has already been exhibited at a very important museum in France and more of these are in the works. Exhibiting them on the terrain of the camp is something different, when you return the pictures to their place, which causes a healthy and needed collision between my point of view and that of all visitors that pass through here daily. Not many have the opportunity to go beyond the confines of the former camps' terrain, even for a few hours to wander only in the "area" aimlessly and in this way experience differently, more calmly, this overwhelming tragedy. Buses continuously come and go full of travelers, wave after wave, forming a human flow, full of sadness, tears, and miscomprehension. Showing them this here, above all proposing taking a different breath... and

at the same time offering a pause, so that to open their eyes and emotions to something that lies further, only a few kilometers away.

- During your time in Oświęcim you visited the former concentration camp. What were your impressions of this place? What do you remember? What, from this historical world, made the biggest impression on you?

In completing this project over the last two years I was in Oświęcim 6 or 7 times, during different seasons, but I only visited the camps during my first visit. Feelings after time spent in both camps, Auschwitz and Birkenau, are something more than mixed, it is a real test that will forever stay in my mind and I want it to remain that way. This is probably one of the few places on earth that conjures these types of feelings,





where fear, anger and misunderstanding constantly clash with each other and take us into a state of the greatest emptiness and abandonment. After walking out of there, once the visit is over, one needs to catch one's breath and to float to the surface of our world, our today's reality. This has to do with the full meaning of this place, where people were able to do something that had probably never even been contemplated: creation, organization, and implementation, on an industrial scale, barbarism in an unnamable project all done for their own profit.

More than anything, I remember the thousands of personal effects that you can see and almost touch at the Auschwitz I camp, spread among the various blocks. All of these normal things, everyday items easily recognizable, plunge us so intimately and with such turmoil into the millions of unbearable stories. At Birkenau it is different. Only some of the barracks still stand and it gave me a feeling for emptiness, the very moment I walked through the gate...

☐ Do you feel that these pictures can be understood beyond Oświęcim and the concentration camp? Do they have some kind of universal value?

I don't believe that understanding my pictures

could be interpreted in a vastly different way than they could be here. When the exhibition was presented at the Center of History and the Resistance in Lyon, more than a year ago, visitors were drawn mainly to the large amount of details that are in my pictures, as well as the fragility that small format provides. They were forced to come as close to these tiny windows as possible to look into my vision of this "end of the world" and in this way to accompany me in this search, intimate, and simultaneously fragile. My desire is that the visitor feels my artistic approach as much as possible... regardless of their age, education, or nationality. They found themselves quite quickly in the peace of the photo and richness of the grayness and were in a state to look at the place and its history from a modern perspective; including the camps in the wider perspective with the territory or region comparable to any other. Borders, though many, were thin and one could easily cross them. It is this that I tried to analyze during my photographic work, trying to add a slightly different view and completing those already in existence.

☐ As someone from abroad visiting Poland how do you view modern Oświęcim?

I have visited Oświęcim from many different sides... and in different



times of year. If I try to put aside its horrifying history, I could compare this small town with the one in which I live and where I raise my sons in France. A calm town, where winter is bitter, but becomes milder when the sun comes

out. This is a region with a harmonious landscape, with gentle lines, where, after the rain in the air there is a pleasant smell of peat and earth, a nice smell for someone like me who likes the countryside. I have met many people who cannot im-

agine life there, to raise their children, or to even work there. I have asked myself these questions... that which is unbearable also has its limits. ■

Interview by:

Paweł Sawicki

Translated from French by:

Jarek Mensfelt







# END OF THE 2009 RETROSPECTIVE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH EWA SZPRYNGER

**A**t the end of March at the Jewish Center the latest showing of films with Jewish themes "Jewish Motifs. Retrospective 2009" ended. During the showing, Oświęcim's public had the opportunity to see over thirty films, documentaries, short films, and animations. The end of April in Warsaw saw the start of another showing "Jewish Motifs 2010." Below is an interview with Ewa Szprynger, Chairman of the Jewish Motifs Association and organizer of the festival.



Photo: Anna Szprynger

□ Not long ago at the Jewish Center in Oświęcim the latest showing of films "Jewish Motifs. Retrospective 2009" came to an end. Among them were films mainly from Israel, but audiences could also see productions from Poland, Sweden, England, and France. The range of topics taken up by the makers was very wide. What has been noticeable for some time now, is that there are fewer films about the Holocaust. Do the organizers purposely do this, or is this more or less the scope of films that are sent to you?

I can't fully agree with this. The Holocaust is the topic of many of the films, even those that seem to relate to the contemporary world or to morality. It turns out that the trauma of mass murder is inherited. It touches the third, even fourth generation. In films, mainly documentary, this can show up as over-sensitivity to violence or justification of certain attitudes in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This year, for example, almost 300 films were sent from all over the world. There are technical criteria, but also important are the topics, characters, and filming method. We look for Jewish motifs in this. Sometimes we follow our instincts and assumptions, that because the film moved us, it will also move the audience.

□ Generally speaking, what are the topics of films that are shown at the festival?

Films, shown at our festival are very different, because the world is diverse and rich in topics of interest to filmmakers. Of course—we are

interested in everything that we do not see everyday in Poland, as well as morality, conflict, religion, everyday life that to us is extraordinary... We are most interested in showing films that are "about something," so that we can learn about the culture of people that are scattered all over the world, who have a sense of their Jewish identity, who for about 70 years are no longer our neighbors and that is why they seem to be exotic.

□ What are your criteria—what kind of film is and what kind of film is not about a Jewish topic?

Qualification of films for the Festival is decided by a Selection Committee, which has the job of choosing 30-40 of the best films, sent to us from all over the world. Just as in school, we give the films grades. Any uncertainty, if a given film should be shown or not is decided by Andrzej Titkow, the artistic director of the Festival. Sometimes this is a very difficult decision. This year, for example, almost 300 films were sent from all over the world. There are technical criteria, but also important are the topics, characters, and filming method. We look for Jewish motifs in this. Sometimes we follow our instincts and assumptions, that because the film moved us, it will also move the audience.

□ Many films dealt with the creation of the State of Israel, there were also films dealing with Israel's contemporary identity, films dedicated to war, the conflict with Palestine. You also show contempo-

rary, young Israel... an Israel that asks, what is its identity, which is "examining" its past... What meaning does the festival have in a somewhat homogeneous country, which Poland has become after the War?

The audience best exemplifies the meaning and need for the existence of the "Jewish Motifs" Festival. Not too long ago, the contest showings took place in one of the two Muranów Cinema screening rooms. For a few years now, they are shown in both rooms, because interest in Jewish topics has outgrown our wildest dreams. The showings were overcrowded and—though it was risky from a safety perspective—the audience sat on the floor. That's why for five days we "take over" the entire Muranów cinema. It is also significant that all screenings are free of charge. What is more—the audience has the opportunity to meet and talk to the directors, invited by us, of the films shown. I am very happy about this interest in the Jewish world, because in this way we learn more about people, those that we have lost, for example what interesting people were thrown out, even in March of 1968, from the Polish People's Republic. Perhaps because of our audience there will be fewer stereotypes, and perhaps we will arm someone with arguments against anti-Semitism? This is why I believe that our festival has a meaning that is not only enriching and educational. That is why we are so happy to travel the country to show the best films of the festival.

□ The festival is connected to a volunteer drive that has many participants. Many young people contact you. Is this the same with the interest in the festival, or is the audience more heterogeneous? I'm asking this because it's noticeable that youngest generation (16-27 years old) is interested, but the generation of "parents" (40 years old plus) is much less interested.

For us, the organizers of the Festival, it is very satisfying that every year there are more volunteers to help us in this endeavor. I, myself, am curious why this is the case. Perhaps the atmosphere? Maybe also interest in the subject? However, the young people that come to help us have lots of work and not much time to watch the films. Without them not much would be accomplished. There wouldn't be an audience vote and award for a film chosen by them. However, they say we are a prestigious festival and working with us enhances their CVs. They really do work very hard. It's great. I've even heard of students skipping school in favor of our festival. The "parents" generation comes to our screenings in the evening or during the weekend, and I wouldn't say that they are not as interested in the subject. They are simply busier and have more responsibilities. But it is true that young people dominate the audience. And this is something that we also wanted.

□ In Oświęcim, the festival's films were shown again as a retrospective. Do you think that

the idea of the festival has a special meaning in this place?

Oświęcim borders Auschwitz. The meaning of this place, of course, does not require comment. I had the great pleasure to take part in the first retrospective in Oświęcim and I think that because these films were shown here is a symbolic triumph of life over death, remembrance over forgetting. I'm thankful that we have such an opportunity.

□ In Oświęcim we had the retrospective, but soon—from 20 April in Warsaw the following Festival is starting. What is planned for this year? Can the Oświęcim public count on the fact that the films will also be shown here next year?

We will show 41 films from 16 countries. It looks like there will be a several-day long marathon of truly interesting pictures—both fiction as well as documentary. Topics will be both modern and historical, shown through the prism of many nations' experience. It is important for us that our Festival will be a chance for directors from the former Eastern Bloc. That's why I'm happy to say that among the films that qualified for the competition showing are those from Russia, Belarus, Slovakia, Serbia, the Czech Republic, and Kazakhstan. If you wish to invite us—we will certainly come and share Jewish motifs from all over the world with Oświęcim's audience. ■

Interview by: Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka







## ALL WANT TO BE VICTIMS

BELOW IS THE SECOND PART OF THE INTERVIEW WITH NORBERT RECK

**N**orbert Reck was one of the guests of the New Year's retreat at the Center for Dialog and Prayer in Oświęcim, which took part for the sixth time from 28 December—1 January 2010. This year's meeting was entitled "The end of silence."

□ **How do you understand the words of J.B. Metz, "If there is no God for us in Auschwitz, how can there be a God anywhere else"?**

I understand this sentence this way: if you cannot testify about God at Auschwitz, then any other place where you can witness to God has no meaning for us. That means that if you cannot experience God

in such an extremely hellish place like Auschwitz then speaking of God does not have much meaning. This is why for J.B. Metz it is so important that God, in His way, was present at Auschwitz.

□ **Has memory of Auschwitz changed us in our Christianity, or has it brought about a new quality of Christianity?**

NR: Maybe not Auschwitz itself, but our thinking about Auschwitz. Of course there are discussions and disagreements that change us fundamentally. I feel that with time we have learned that the suffering was enormous, horrifying, and without sense, which God did not want for people. Not all suffering has to be endured patiently, there is suf-

fering that also has to be battled. If it cannot be gotten rid of, then one has to at least try to find a cure. There is an idea that is almost nonexistent in theology before Auschwitz, with the exception of mystics. This is an idea that started to expand in the 1960s, that today as Christians we don't understand our life in the way that we should suffer until our death,

regardless of how horrifying it can be, but we understand life in a way that we must work actively—this is the effect of thinking about Auschwitz.

□ **You wrote in your text "On earth from Auschwitz. Theological and philosophical reflections on an unusual gift," Spira, 2007: *Do not take the perspective of the victims, and do***



Photo: CDP







## NORBERT RECK

Norbert Reck, born in 1961, Doctor of theology, editor responsible for the international German-language theological periodical *Concilium*; member of the Research Council of the periodical *Theology of History*. His doctoral thesis concerned the meaning of witnesses of concentration camps for theology (1998). Author of radio shows and books, as well as reports on religious education. He lectures in philosophy and theology in a Catholic School in Munich, the University of Saarland in Saarbrücken, and at the Free University of Berlin. E-mail: norbert.reck@mnet-mail.de

*not force the perspective of the perpetrators into yourself if you were not a perpetrator. Guilt is not inherited, it is always personal. Instead, we must stand on the side of reality. What does it mean for Germans to stand on the side of reality?*

You cannot hide the presumption of innocence in the form of the victim, but you can see what happened, what my people did, what wounds still exist, and what I can do to heal these wounds. However, that, what I always called the "German creed," i.e. we suffered, we are innocent, we couldn't do anything, we didn't know—this is what Germans should say goodbye to. There were some in Germany that resisted National Socialism. I am speaking about the young Christians from the White Rose Movement. They did not have much of a chance to change the country. They created and distributed leaflets and in this way they did something. You can always do something. In Germany I learned that if people believed themselves to be victims, this was often a lie. There exists a general feeling—we fell into the hands of criminals, who cheated us, made false promises as well as illusions, and we were used by the criminals to perpetrate crimes that we never wanted to commit. I never believe that most people became victims of an illusion, but they clearly knew what they wanted. They knew what they wanted when they were fascinated by Hitler, when they paid their taxes, when they joined various organizations, and finally with all of their strength, sacrificing their own lives fought for Hitler. Only in 1944 when the end was obvious, people

started to see themselves as victims, but it cannot be this way.

□ **What is the difference between being guilty and being responsible? What is the responsibility of the descendants of the perpetrators based on? Guilt is always something personal. One becomes guilty once someone has done another person harm. I am not guilty because of my race, my background, or my nationality. I am therefore above all responsible for the world in which I live. More precisely, responsible for the area where I can do something.**

Protestant German theologian Dorothee Soelle said: "I am responsible for the house I did not build but inhabit." We have inherited a certain house and this house has particular problems, even though we have not caused them we must do something about them. Or, using the words of the Bible, the sins of our fathers who have not repented still exist. This guilt does not die. Violence, which we "bring into the world" still exists and is toxic if we do not do anything. Children of perpetrators are not guilty, but are responsible for what their fathers have brought into the world.

□ **Do Germans need to feel they are "victims"?**

You escape into the role of being a victim so that you do not have to ask yourself questions about guilt. If a family feels its guilt, guilt of the parents and grandparents, then it is usually not acknowledged. If we return to differentiating guilt and responsibility, then today's Germans do not have a problem with guilt, only the feeling of guilt.

It could help them to not take the role of the victim, but look where true guilt lies... their ancestors. And if they could go through this, then the general feeling of guilt disappears and they can become mature enough to feel

lieve, however, that this is the media, Jews, and from abroad. It could help them if they followed that internal voice, to see where the feelings of guilt are originating, so that the cloud of guilt would no longer hang every-

which still exist today. Right now, I am thinking about yesterday evening's discussion with Muriel, one of the participants of the meeting in Oświęcim, who told many stories about her family's meetings with soldiers of the Wehrmacht, who did not function in accordance with the image of the perpetrator but also helped her family... Wilm Hosenfeld is a similar example, or from the other side, I am reminded of the books by Andrzej

## BOOKS BY NORBERT RECK:

1. „Mit Blick Auf die Täter. Fragen an die deutsche Theologie nach 1945"
2. „Abenteuer Gott – Den christlichen Glauben neu denken"
3. „Erinnern. Erkundungen zu einer theologischen Basiskategorie"
4. „Von Gott reden im Land der Täter. Theologische Stimmen der dritten Generation seit der Shoah"
5. „Im Angesicht der Zeugen. Eine Theologie nach Auschwitz"

responsibility.

□ **Mr. Reck, what do Germans expect? What do they want?**

This is exactly the question that has to be asked. Latest research shows that 67% of Germans do not want to be assigned guilt by those from abroad, Jews, and the press. This is amazing. I do not recall that in the last 40 years those abroad, as well as Jewish people have placed collective guilt on Germans. I believe that this is something that lies inside them, something that does not allow them to come to terms with the feelings of guilt. This unfortunate situation comes from the fact that Germans feel that others are accusing them. And to the question of what Germans want, you can say that they want to come to terms with this history, but they will not find peace as long as they believe that others should remain silent about this subject.

□ **Before that, do Germans have to stop blaming themselves?**

Germans hear an internal voice that talks about guilt. They be-

where, but it can also be said: there were perpetrators, who have names, and the descendants are not perpetrators. Then it would be clear. However, in not painting a too general picture, it must be said that for the last 10 or so years, there is a growing tendency to not to view themselves as victims, but to specifically look into their own families' histories, to study the history of perpetrators, work though it and become responsible. This has already started, however, it does not concern the majority.

□ **How do you view our nationalities, Polish and German? As victims and executioners? Or in some other way?**

We should be rather careful using the concepts of nations trying to assign certain characteristics. Naturally, it is important that the German Third Reich attacked Poland. If at the same time we return to the beginning of our talk, when we easily used the ideas of perpetrators and victims, we may overlook other avenues for action that existed in history and

Szczypiorski, someone who did not want to see Poland only as a nation of victims but rather showed a varied history. It would be desirable to now move from the general history to one that is more specific. On the other hand, stories about good Germans should not be used to downplay the crime.

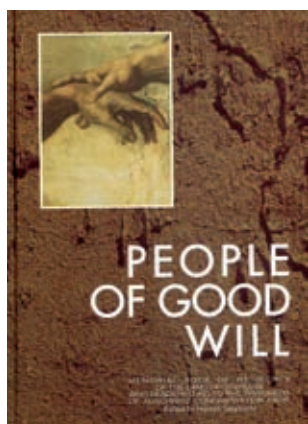
□ **We started from victims and we finish on sacrifice. What do the sacrifices teach us?**

I don't believe that there is a general answer for such a question. If my friend Hannah Mandel, who was liberated from Auschwitz, she was called a victim, I have a feeling that she would not like that label. But if we are not asking her about her opinion, we call her a victim, then perhaps teach us, as it is often said, that you expect anything from anyone, both the good and bad. It means that you must be ready for the bad and have faith in the good. And this is what we learn from her. ■

Interview by:  
Marta Titaniec  
Translated from German by:  
Joachim von Wedel







Born March 29, 1913 in Brzeszcze, the daughter of Romuald and Karolina, nee Faltus. She attended elementary school and *gimnasium* in her hometown and continued her education at the St. Hildegard Teachers' College in Biała Krakowska, graduating in 1932. She was a member at the time of Polish Scouts Union, and organized excursions and scout camps Society and appeared in its theatrical productions. In 1937, she began teaching at the pub-

## PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL

IRENA KAWALA  
(1913-1984, MARRIED NAME: KAHANEK)

lic school at Kamionka in the Eastern Marches.

The outbreak of the war found her in Brzeszcze. From the very beginning, as soon as she learned about the camp and the conditions there, she became involved in helping the prisoners. At first, she collected food, mostly bread, onions, and fats, and gave these items to the women who fed the prisoners. Sporadically, she also gave food to the prisoner labor details working in the area. In 1940, she was employed at Tomasz Kegel's grocery store in Przecieszyn. From that time on, her aid took an organized form. She then became a member of the Peasant Battalions (BCh), using the pseudonym "Hanka." She was in contact with the or-

ganization's couriers, most frequently with Helena Plotnicka and Władysława Kożusznik. Running the risk of great danger, she gave them bread, fats, saccharine, and sugar in exchange for counterfeit food ration coupons, and later without any coupons at all. She also gave them medicine that she obtained from pharmacists and physicians in Brzeszcze. She also supplied medicine and food to the ZWZ/AK courier Zofia Zdrowak. From Helena Plotnicka, she also obtained illegal correspondence from the prisoners and mailed it to the indicated addresses. Correspondence to the prisoners arrived at her address, and she gave it to Helena Plotnicka. She concealed various clandes-

tine materials for the leader of the local BCh group, Wojciech Jekielek, in the grocery store without the knowledge of the owner.

After liberation, she joined the effort to get elementary school in Brzeszcze back into usable shape, and then began working as a teacher. She taught physical education, Polish, and history. At the same time, she taught adults in night school. On August 10, 1946, she married Franciszek Kahanek, a teacher of geography and biology in the same elemen-

tary school, and later gave birth to a daughter, Maria. She was also active as a volunteer in the community. Together with Mieczysław Faltus, the director of the Brzeszcze Culture House, she helped children prepare theatrical performances that were presented in Brzeszcze and in other localities.

For her underground work during the war, she received the Knight's Cross of the Order of Poland Reborn. She died in Brzeszcze on August 20, 1984. ■

## VESTIGES OF HISTORY FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE AUSCHWITZ MUSEUM

The Museum has a large collection of decorated camp letters. Created on the regulation camp forms, the pictures are in many cases truly miniature masterpieces.

These letters made it thought the German censorship, so that means that they were sent through official channels. Censors treated decorated letters as propaganda material. However, the goal of the prisoners was to make contact with their loved ones and provide their families with at least a moment of joy. The artistic level of the decorated letters, however here not the most important, is often better than large pictures created for the SS men or

for the walls of the camp museum (Lagermuseum). The flowers, landscapes, and scenes from fairy tales that complemented the text were expressions of true feelings that prisoners were forbidden to write.

Today we cannot call these little works of camp art decorations—they very accurately express what was not allowed to be expressed in words—longing for home, freedom, and normal life. ■

Agnieszka Sieradzka  
Collections Department  
A-BSM

## FROM GANOBIS'S CABINET

### A UNIQUE COIN

This coin originates from the Great Duchy of Oświęcim-Zator, and is dated 1776. It was created during the time of Maria Teresa—from the grace of God, Roman Empress, Queen of Hungary, Bohemia, Galicia, Lodomeria, Grand Duchess of Austria, Duchess of Oświęcim and Zator. The coin is made of silver, weighs 9.2 grams and has a decorative edge. This is one of the rarities in my collection.

The coins were created in the Viennese mint in the years 1775-77. Other than the 30, 15 Kreuzer coins were also minted. In this way, people living in these lands were gotten used to using Austrian currency.

On the front, above the crossed palm and laurel branches is the bust of Maria Teresa, and under it

an inscription in two lines: XXXXVIII EX MARCA/PURA VIEN. Around the rim is the inscription: M. THERESIA.D.G.R.I.HU. BO.GA.LO.REG. On the reverse side, under the crown, you can see a shield with four coats of arms of Galicia (three crowns), Lodomeria (two fields of a chessboard), Oświęcim and Zator (eagle), as well as the coat of arms

of the Habsburgs. Under the crown there is a shield with a horizontal line, under it, decorated with a wreath, the worth of coin—30 kr.—meaning 30 Kreuzer. In a semicircle is the inscription: ARCHID.AUS.DUX. OSW.ZAT.1776.

My collection also includes another older coin—a copper coin of Maria Teresa from 1774.

On the front you can see four similar coats of arms, while the inscription on the reverse is SCHILLING 1774. The coin weighs 2.2 grams.

Being over 230 years old, the coin is a unique piece in my collection. I know that there are even older coins connected to the history of the Oświęcim—a Waclaw and Jana IV Heller from the Duchy of Oświęcim, years 1445-1457. However, since my collector's luck has not run out yet, I hope that one day I will be able to find one of these. ■

Photo: M. Ganobis's archive



Coin—over 230 years old

Mirosław Ganobis



A decorated camp letter

Photo: Collections Department, A-BSM