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**TODAY, ONCE AGAIN, COMES THE TIME FOR
ESSENTIAL HUMAN CHOICES. 78th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ**

16 OBJECTS
FROM YAD
VASHEM
ON DISPLAY IN
GERMANY

THOU SHALT NOT
BE INDIFFERENT.
ANNIVERSARY OF
THE WARSAW
GHETTO
UPRISING

THE AWARENESS
OF THE
HOLOCAUST
IN THE
NETHERLANDS

SILENT
WITNESSES
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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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TODAY, ONCE AGAIN, COMES THE TIME FOR ESSENTIAL HUMAN CHOICES. 78TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

On January 27, a group of 18 Auschwitz and Holocaust Survivors met at the former Auschwitz camp to commemorate the 78th anniversary of the liberation of this German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The event was held under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda.

The main theme of the anniversary was the process of planning, creating and expanding the system of dehumanisation and genocide at Auschwitz, which was particularly strongly defined by the words of survivor Marian Turski 'Auschwitz did not fall from the sky'.

The witnesses of history were accompanied, among others, by Minister Wojciech Kolarski from the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland and other representatives of state authorities from Poland, the Second Gentleman of the United States Douglas Emhoff, the Minister of Culture of Slovenia Asta Vrečko, the Secretary of State for Veterans' affairs and Memory from France Patricia Mirallès, ambassadors and diplomats, representatives of the clergy, regional authorities, local governments, employees of museums and memorial sites.

While the function of Auschwitz as an extermination center was taking shape in 1942, in 1943 the scale of operation became industrial. In the spring of that year, the Germans completed the construction of four installations at Auschwitz II-Birkenau, which included gas chambers and modern facilities for cremating corpses.

Two Auschwitz Survivors spoke during the commemoration event: Dr. Eva Umlauf and Zdzisław Włodarczyk.

Eva Umlauf was born in the Novaky labour camp in 1942. She was deported to Auschwitz on 3 November 1944 in a transport of Jews from Sered in Slovakia, together with her whole family as a two-year-old child. She was liberated on 27 January 1945.

In her address, she recounted the wartime fate of her family and shared personal reflections on the importance of memory.

'All other members of the family were not that lucky – apart from me and my Mum nobody survived; my sister, Nora was born shortly after the liberation, in April 1945. All my mother's siblings were murdered, she said.

'Auschwitz is the subject which is so much moving and so much distressful, the atrocity of which cannot be comprehended – either rationally or emotionally. The fact that I confront with "Auschwitz inside me" and "Auschwitz in a German society", is understandable. For me, Auschwitz is a traumatizing element of my own biography, my emotional heritage. And this emotional heritage will not end with me. It will be transferred from one generation to another. I must ensure that this heritage should not be transferred onto my sons, my granddaughters or people around me,' said Eva Umlauf.



78th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

January 27, 2023





The last speaker was Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, the director of the Museum.

'Our world proved to be fragile in the age of murderous antisemitism, Übermensch ideology and a craving for the so-called Lebensraum. Our world continues to be fragile. Here we are, we stand with you, Dear Survivors, you who have walked the darkest path of war. And it is difficult for us to stand here. More difficult than before. First, war violates treaties, then borders, finally people. Civilian victims, dehumanised, terrorised, humiliated, they do not die by chance. They are taken hostage by wartime megalomania,' director Cywiński said.

'The Warsaw district of Wola, Zamojszczyzna, Oradour and Lidice, now bear different names:

Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel, Mariupol and Donietsk. Similar sick megalomania, similar lust for power. And almost same-sounding myths of exceptionalism, of greatness, of primacy... but written in Russian,' he underlined.

'Being silent means giving voice to the perpetrators, staying neutral means reaching out to the rapist, remaining indifferent is tantamount to condoning murder. And today, before our very eyes, our memory is putting us to the test. Today we can clearly see which door is opening, and which remains closed,' said Piotr Cywiński.

'In the first generation after the war, the Rolling Stones sang:
War, children, it's just a shot away,
I tell you love, sister, it's just a kiss away.



LIFE WITH THE WOUNDS FROM AUSCHWITZ.

THE SPEECH OF AN AUSCHWITZ SURVIVOR EVA UMLAUF

Dear Naomi, My Granddaughter,
I am so happy that you are here today,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Being the youngest of the Auschwitz survivors,
I was asked to speak to you today, in this
place, on the occasion of today's anniversary. I
am really grateful for this opportunity.
You must know that **I do not want to talk like
a politician**. I do not want to engage into
theoretical deliberations about forgiveness,
absolution and compensation. I would not also
to mitigate or downplay what people did and
what they went through in Auschwitz. For me,

personally, such speeches carrying an appeal
are too abstract and too smooth.

I consider myself to be **an heiress of the
feelings who works for peace ...**

Speaking to you today, I would like to stress
that it is the **human being and humanity** that
always matter – especially here in Auschwitz.
Our reflections refer to the empathy between
individuals and contacts between them, full of
mutual respect. This is the opposite of
division. Divisions belong to a **simplified
picture of the world**, which knows only:
• good and evil;



Photo 1
112



Photo 2
112

It is a terrible thing for a survivor family of three persons that **in fact we have no relatives,**

- no aunts and uncles;
- no grandparents or great grandparents
- no cousins.

All of them, with no exception, were killed.

In our family, we hardly talked about it; we were not allowed to discuss it. It is surprising for me how my mother, in the face of that tragedy, managed to cope in life and to give us, her two daughters, **almost a normal childhood and youth.** In the photo (no. 5) you can see that Nora and I were two apparently normally developing children.

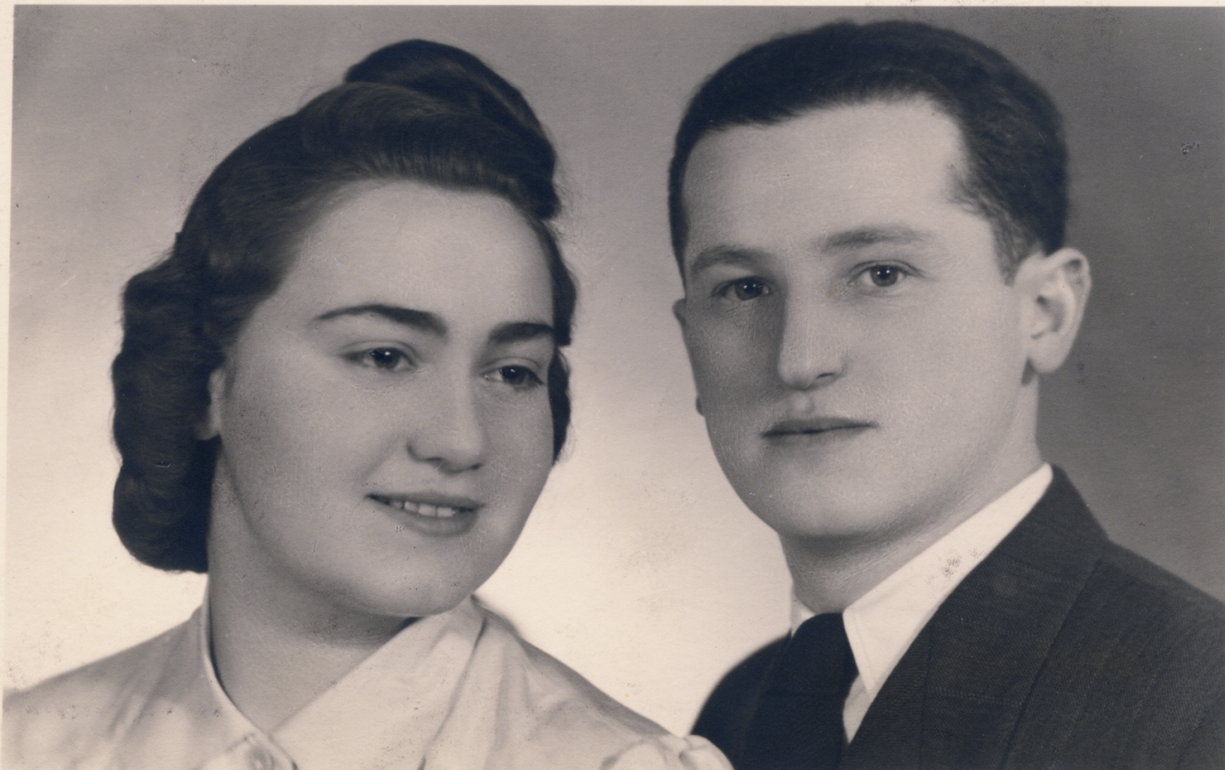
Our mother was a very resourceful and entrepreneurial person with a great willpower. She managed to catch up the secondary school final exams, then became a teacher, working willingly in this profession in a Jewish commune. Perhaps sometimes she lacked the desired strength, but, as a

teacher she held onto an “**apparently normal life**”. This provided her with a **structure helping her to survive** in spite of her physical and mental wounds.

Together with my sister, we managed to understand this only after Mum retired. When the number of duties and also her internal stamina and **resilience** decreased, she bent under the pressure of depressive thoughts. It was very hard for us, her daughters, to cope with the despair and **depressive moods** of our mother. The violence she had suffered and the gloom of her past, took control over her spirit.

When we were still children we **did not dare** to ask her openly about the past of her family members. We did not want to see her distressed or sad. We do not know where she managed to hide her entire terror, great fear and profound sadness caused by the loss. In the photo, you can see my mother in a 1992, when we celebrated my fiftieth birthday (photo no. 6).

Photo 3



This attitude led me to a decision that the fact that I survived

- should be looked at
- felt directly
- spoken out loud
- shared with others in my own family and also in open groups.

And thus, I should go through the **process of internal development**, even though it is painful.

I would like to stress that we are fortunate that my sons and my granddaughters confront with our family past. That is why, I am especially glad that my granddaughter, **Naomi** came from the United States to take part in this anniversary. Her sister, **Nadja**, would come also, if it was not for her scholarship obligations in Kenya.

This is how my biographical publication should be understood. The pain repressed for so long caused by the inhumane crimes and violence towards my (large) family and towards other people, revived now in the memories, is immense and for me difficult to bear.

Without Auschwitz my biography would be completely different, but Auschwitz cannot be treated like it never happened.

Without Auschwitz my own family, my three sons and my two granddaughters would have a different emotional heritage and different life.

My engagement for a **peaceful future full of human respect** is necessary for me. Auschwitz cannot be repeated.

Photo 4

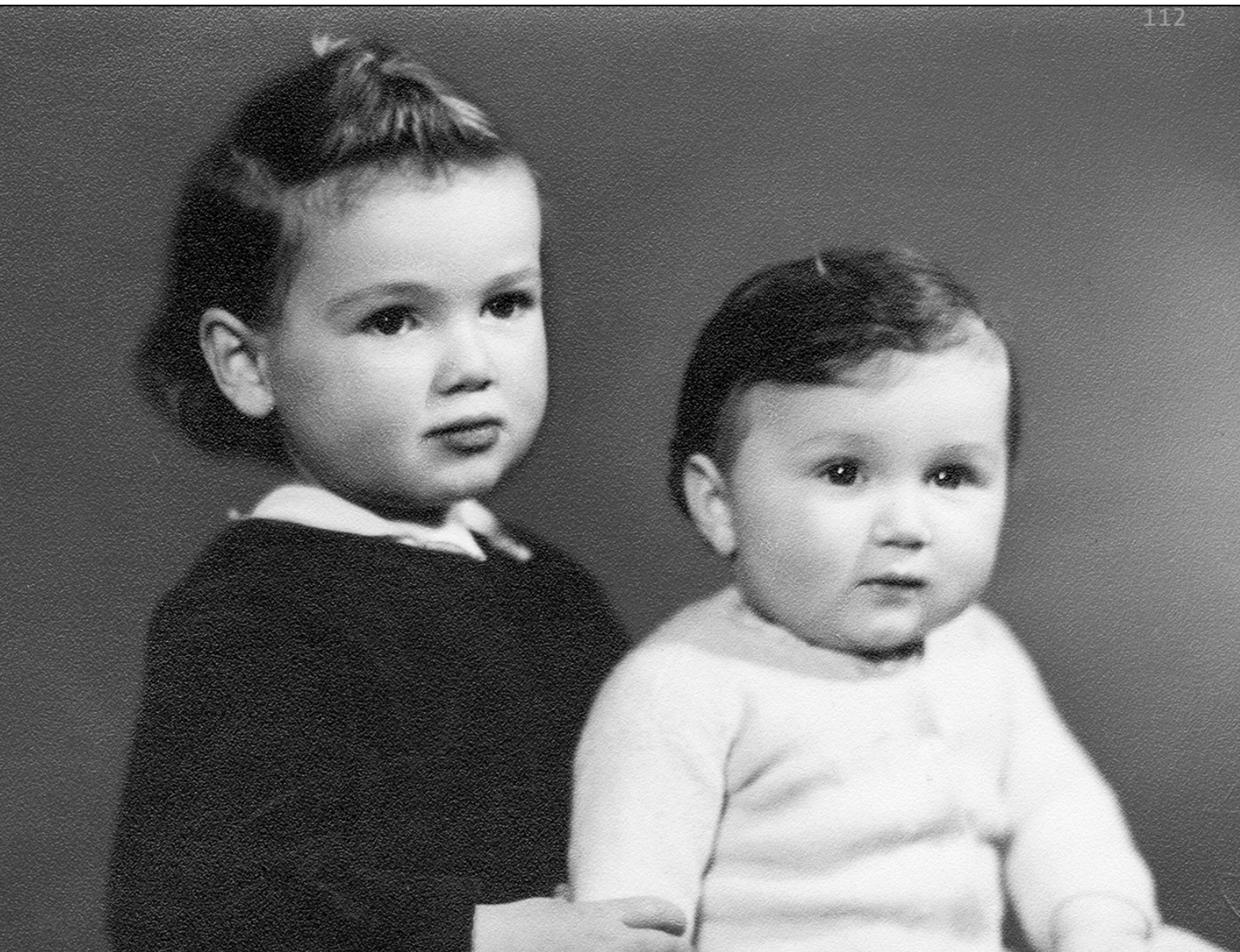
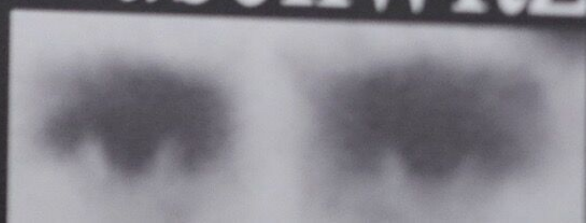




Photo 5
112

Państwowe Muzeum

Auschwitz





SPEECH OF ZDZISŁAWA WŁODARCZYK, AN AUSCHWITZ SURVIVOR

Dear Guests. Colleagues here, from the camp.

My name is Zdzisława Włodarczyk (nee Bogdaszewska). 78 years ago, with my parents and younger brother, I ended up here.

I was 11, and my brother – 7.

When we were pushed to the fright carriages, being taken from the transition camp in Pruszków, someone asked aloud: where will we go? The answer was: to a village near Kraków. We were going for a long time. We were the first transport from the Warsaw Uprising. The first days. My father tried to watch the train route through a chink between the planks. It was already a twilight, when I heard my father's desperate scream. He held his head in the hands, beating it against the wall of the carriage, shouting: God, where did they take us, where did they take us? I looked through the chink and saw a white plaque with a black inscription: Auschwitz.

We were driven through the gate. Then we drove on the right side of the ramp. The train stopped. They were opening the carriages, shouting: ruas, schnell, banditen. Those were the first words.

At once they separated men and women with children. We were led along the barbed wires, It was dark. We were brought to a dark wooden barrack with the floor covered with sand and chloride. We sat on the floor. This is how we spent the first night.

In the morning, Mum told us that men were near the barrack and Dad was there, too. We sat the whole day with our Dad near the barrack. People were looking for their families

and friends, they also burned paper money.

In late afternoon, Mum told me to go to the barrack and she stayed with Dad. This was the last time when I saw him.

Next day in the afternoon, we were brought to a brick building. It was a bathhouse. We had to take off everything and stand naked. Then our hair was cut and we were shaven.

They herded us along the corridor further to another room. Someone shouted: now they will let out the gas. But there was no gas. This was water, once cold and once hot. There was no soap or towels.

The continuet to chase us. Women stood separately, colorful dresses were thrown at them, so it was hard to recognize them.

We, the children, got our own clothes in which we arrived. After the disinfection, they were very stiff.

They lined us to wait for the numbers on pieces of fabric. My Mum got 85 281, and I had the next one, and the brother received 192 798. And then we got the first piece of bread. It was a small loaf – for adults it was $\frac{1}{4}$ of a loaf, and for us, children – $\frac{1}{8}$. It was our first meal.

And again we were led along the barbed wires to brick barracks. We were completely separated then: children separate, and mothers separate.

The barrack had some walled cages inside – they were called bunks. An older female inmate, block prisoner, said that we had to





We made up a larger group of children. We were looked after by an elderly prisoner, a Belarussian Janeczka. She took us to the barrack and we stayed with her. We were hungry. Older prisoners who also stayed, smashed storage buildings, looking for food.

The brother brought two loaves of bread and he said he had got them from someone. We slept on it. The bread was dry, so he melted snow on the stoves which were in our barrack, where we stayed. We fired up the stove, probably someone older than us was looking after the fire. And this was our meal. And it was like that for about 10 days.

And some day, later on I learned that it was on 27th January that the front-line came. We could see soldiers running in white uniforms from afar. Our caretaker told us not to go away, because the front was there and we could get killed.

Soldiers came into our barrack. There was a tall officer, wearing some kind of cap and I remember his words. I don't know if he spoke Polish or Russian, but we understood his words: Children, what are you doing here? He said that the Red Cross would arrive and



THE ADDRESS OF DR. PIOTR M. A. CYWIŃSKI DIRECTOR OF THE AUSCHWITZ MEMORIAL

Marian Turski, a survivor, warned:
"Auschwitz did not just fall from the sky".
Halina Birenbaum, a survivor, wrote: "it's
not rain, it's people".

Auschwitz emerged out of lust for power
and out of megalomania.
Paradoxically it was the quintessence of
great progress; the industrialisation of the
20th century.
The camp had been conceived of, designed,
planned, sketched, drawn and expanded.
Architects, planners, designers and
surveyors worked on it.

And here we are today, standing among
wires and chimney stacks,
the remains of barracks and gas chambers,
where German Nazis dehumanised,
humiliated and murdered Jews, Poles,
Roma, Soviet prisoners of war and many
others.
These are authentic remains of a poorly
conceived marriage:
that of Viennese romanticism and Prussian
positivism.
We can see how fragile our civilisation is.

Our world proved to be fragile in the age of
murderous antisemitism,
Übermensch ideology and a craving for the
so-called Lebensraum.
Our world continues to be fragile.

Here we are, we stand with you, Dear
Survivors,
you who have walked the darkest path of

war.
And it is difficult for us to stand here. More
difficult than before.

First, war violates treaties, then borders,
finally people.
Civilian victims; dehumanised, terrorised,
humiliated-
they do not die by chance.
They are taken hostage by wartime
megalomania.

The Warsaw district of Wola,
Zamojszczyzna, Oradour and Lidice,
now bear different names: Bucha, Irpin,
Hostomel, Mariupol and Donietsk.

Similar sick megalomania, similar lust for
power.
And almost same-sounding myths of
exceptionalism, of greatness, of primacy...
but written in Russian.

We see before our eyes the end of what we
used to call the post-war era.
For decades 'post-war' looked different in
the east than in Western Europe.
But both parts were conjoined by the very
thing that brought together our thoughts
and our identity:
our overarching consciousness of the 'post-
war'.

And now it is all elapsing.
Once again innocent people are being killed
en masse in Europe.
Russia, unable to conquer Ukraine, has



SIXTEEN OBJECTS FROM YAD VASHEM ON DISPLAY IN GERMANY

On 24 January 2023, Yad Vashem Chairman Dayan opened a new exhibition at the Bundestag together with Bundestag President H.E. Ms. Bärbel Bas. The exhibition, entitled "Sixteen Objects," was initiated by the German Society for Yad Vashem (Freundeskreis) to mark Yad Vashem's seventieth anniversary. It features unique Holocaust-era items, one from each of the Federal States of Germany, whose stories are intertwined with individual Jews hailing from across Germany.

Lore Mayerfeld, whose doll, is included in this exhibition remarks:

"We made the decision to donate my doll to Yad Vashem as a family," said Lore Mayerfeld. "At home Inge can only serve to remind me and my family of the atrocities we witnessed and endured, but at Yad Vashem Inge (the name of the doll given by Lore as a child) can tell our story to the world. This is why I go to Germany. To tell my story and the stories of the Six Million who were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators and who they tried to erase all evidence and traces of their existence. These objects are witnesses to their lives and their stories that they never had the opportunity to tell. Through this exhibition and the work of Yad Vashem, we bring the memory out of the past and into the present."

Exhibition co-curators Executive Director of the German Society for Yad Vashem Ruth Ur and Director of the Yad Vashem Artifacts Department Michael Tal state:

"By connecting the personal stories of these objects with the current modern locations in Germany, the exhibition creates a bridge between the memory

of the past to present and future societies. The items presented, which are part of the Yad Vashem's Collections – both large, like the piano that once belonged to the Margulies family, or small, as in the case of Lore Mayerfeld's childhood doll that dons the pajamas she wore the night of the November Pogrom (Kristallnacht) – are a reminder of the countless lives and communities destroyed by Nazi Germany during the Holocaust."

Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan explains:

"I travel to Germany for the first time in my life, well aware of my deep responsibility to the past as well as my commitment, more than ever before, to ensuring a better future. The weight of the memory of the six million mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters – murdered less than eighty years ago simply because they were Jewish – is at the forefront of my responsibilities as the Chairman of Yad Vashem. At the same time, we are acutely aware of divisive antisemitic and xenophobic social elements currently at play in Germany and around the world. On this important visit, I will open an exhibition featuring



THOU SHALT NOT BE INDIFFERENT

Around Us a Sea of Fire temporary exhibition, 11th edition of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Campaign in six cities, workshops with Loesje, outdoor artistic activities, a meeting with Martín Caparrós, academic conferences and numerous educational workshops are merely a fraction of events we have planned for the year 2023 as part of the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

19 April marks the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. On that day in 1943, on the eve of Passover, 50,000 people were still imprisoned in the area of the Warsaw ghetto—among them 20-year old Mietek Pachter, 21-year old Mira Piżyc and 11-year old Helena Kuczer (Krystyna Budnicka). They were no fighters, just like very many others in the ghetto. And yet, their silent resistance was just as important as participating in armed combat. What happened to the tens of thousands of people who descended to underground bunkers during the Uprising and remained unreachable for many days?

The 80th anniversary is a point of departure for us not only to commemorate those who perished in the Warsaw ghetto, but also to listen to the stories of those who survived. Our program for the year 2023 will allow us to acquire a critical perspective on history as well as to look at the present day and into the future—which is what Marian Turski encouraged us all to do on 27 January 2020 when he reminded us of the so-called eleventh commandment—a message from his friend Roman Kent: "Thou Shalt Not Be Indifferent."

We are going to strive to introduce this commandment into our daily lives—both symbolically and practically—by means of the exhibition, numerous events, activities and publications, and the engagement of many people from the world of art and science. We are very keen to honour the eleventh commandment, because if we don't:

"we will not even notice it when upon our own heads, and upon the heads of our

descendants, 'another Auschwitz' falls from the sky".

Some of the anniversary events:

Academic session on the subject: "The Studies on Hunger Disease in the Warsaw Ghetto"

15 March 2023, 12 noon-8 PM

We invite you to an academic session to commemorate the work of the Warsaw Ghetto doctors and to highlight the importance of their research into the hunger disease. The session will be complemented by a lecture addressed to the general public, delivered by a globally-recognised Argentinian journalist Martín Caparrós, author of the outstanding work titled "Hunger".

"Around Us a Sea of Fire. The fate of Jewish civilians during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" – temporary exhibition 18 April 2023 - 8 January 2024

We will open the exhibition on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. For the first time ever, we present the hitherto untold story of the Uprising—we give the floor to the civilians who were hiding inside the ghetto. Against the despair, hunger, fear, inhuman living conditions, they fought "for every day, every hour, every minute" of staying alive. Their resistance was just as vital as armed combat in the streets of the ghetto. Author of the exhibition concept: Prof. B. Engelking, exhibition curator: Z. Schnepf-Kotacz.



Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, Photo. M. Jaźwiecki

**POLIN Award Gala
(second half of November 2023)**

The POLIN Award competition's goal is to promote attitudes and actions which are in line with POLIN Museum's mission. The laureates are individuals or organisations whose activities help protect the memory of the history of Polish Jews and contribute to shaping a common future, mutual understanding and respect. The Award has been granted since 2015. The year 2023 is a special time to honour those who are not indifferent.

THE AWARENESS OF THE HOLOCAUST IN THE NETHERLANDS

Only Half of Respondents Are In Favor Of Recent Efforts By Dutch Public Figures to Acknowledge and Apologize for the Netherlands' Failure to Protect the Jews During the Holocaust

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) today released a Netherlands Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey, including a breakdown of Millennial and Gen Z respondents, exposing a disturbing lack of awareness of key historical facts about the Holocaust and the Netherlands' own connection to Holocaust history.

The number of Dutch adults who believe the Holocaust is a myth was higher than any country previously surveyed; 12% of all respondents believe the Holocaust is a myth or the number of Jews killed has been greatly exaggerated, while 9% are unsure. These numbers are higher among Dutch Millennials and Gen Z, where nearly one-quarter (23%) believe the Holocaust is a myth or the number of Jews killed has been greatly exaggerated, while 12% are unsure.

More than half of all respondents (54% of all respondents and 59% of Millennial and Gen Z) do not know that six million Jews were murdered, and 29% believe that two million or fewer Jews were killed during the Holocaust. Alarmingly, this number grew to 37% of Millennials and Gen Z who believe that two million or fewer Jews were murdered during the Holocaust.

22% of Millennials and Gen Z feel it is acceptable for an individual to support neo-Nazi views and 13% are unsure. 12% of all Dutch respondents feel it is acceptable and 11% are unsure.

When asked whether they support or oppose recent efforts by Dutch public figures to

acknowledge and apologize for the Netherlands' failure to protect Jews during the Holocaust, only 44% of Dutch Millennials and Gen Z support and half (50%) of all Dutch respondents support.

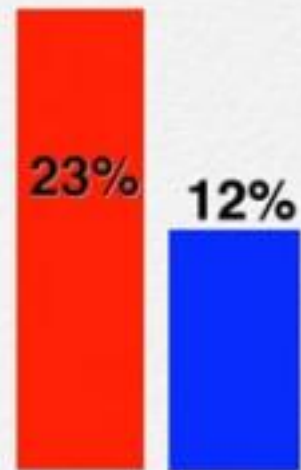
Greg Schneider, Claims Conference Executive Vice President, said, "One of the more troubling trends we continue to see in these surveys is the rise in numbers of people who believe the Holocaust was a myth or that the number of Jews murdered is exaggerated. In the Netherlands survey, 23% of Millennial and Gen Z respondents believe that the Holocaust was a myth or that the number of those murdered was greatly exaggerated. The numbers overall regarding denial and distortion are also higher compared to other countries we have surveyed. This is a denigration to those who lost their entire family during the Holocaust. On a positive note, this survey, like all of the surveys we have conducted, indicates a strong desire for improved Holocaust education in schools across the world."

While many of the identified gaps in Holocaust knowledge among Dutch adults are shocking, there is a clear desire for Holocaust education. Two-thirds (66 percent) of Dutch respondents and a majority of Dutch Millennials and Gen Z agree that Holocaust education should be compulsory in school. And, 77 percent of all respondents say it is important to continue to teach about the Holocaust, in part, so it does not happen again.

Max Arpels Lezer, a Holocaust survivor from the Netherlands, said, "As a Holocaust survivor from the Netherlands, it is important to me that future generations learn about and understand

THE NETHERLANDS HOLOCAUST AWARENESS SURVEY

**Nearly one-quarter of
Dutch Millennials/Gen Z
respondents**
- and 12% of all respondents -
believe the Holocaust is a myth,
or the number of Jews killed
has been greatly exaggerated.



SILENT WITNESSES TO THE HOLOCAUST

A small wooden box. A sketchbook. The portrait of a female prisoner. These are small objects kept at the Museum showing the human dimension of the Auschwitz-Birkenau tragedy hidden in the shadow of great numbers and the magnitude of the nightmare. A new podcast series presents this particular aspect of the camp set against the backdrop of a story told in the place it occurred.

The burnt-out spectacle frame is somewhat of a shadow of the presence of a man for whom this object was so important that he made a makeshift repair by inserting a wire in the place of a lost screw. This is how Andrzej Jastrzębiowski, a conservator from the Auschwitz Museum, presented this small object and its history during a talk in the conservation workshop's warehouse. This human and individual approach inspired a series of six podcasts, Silent Witnesses of History, portraying various aspects of the functioning of the camp while emphasising the personal dimension of what happened at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

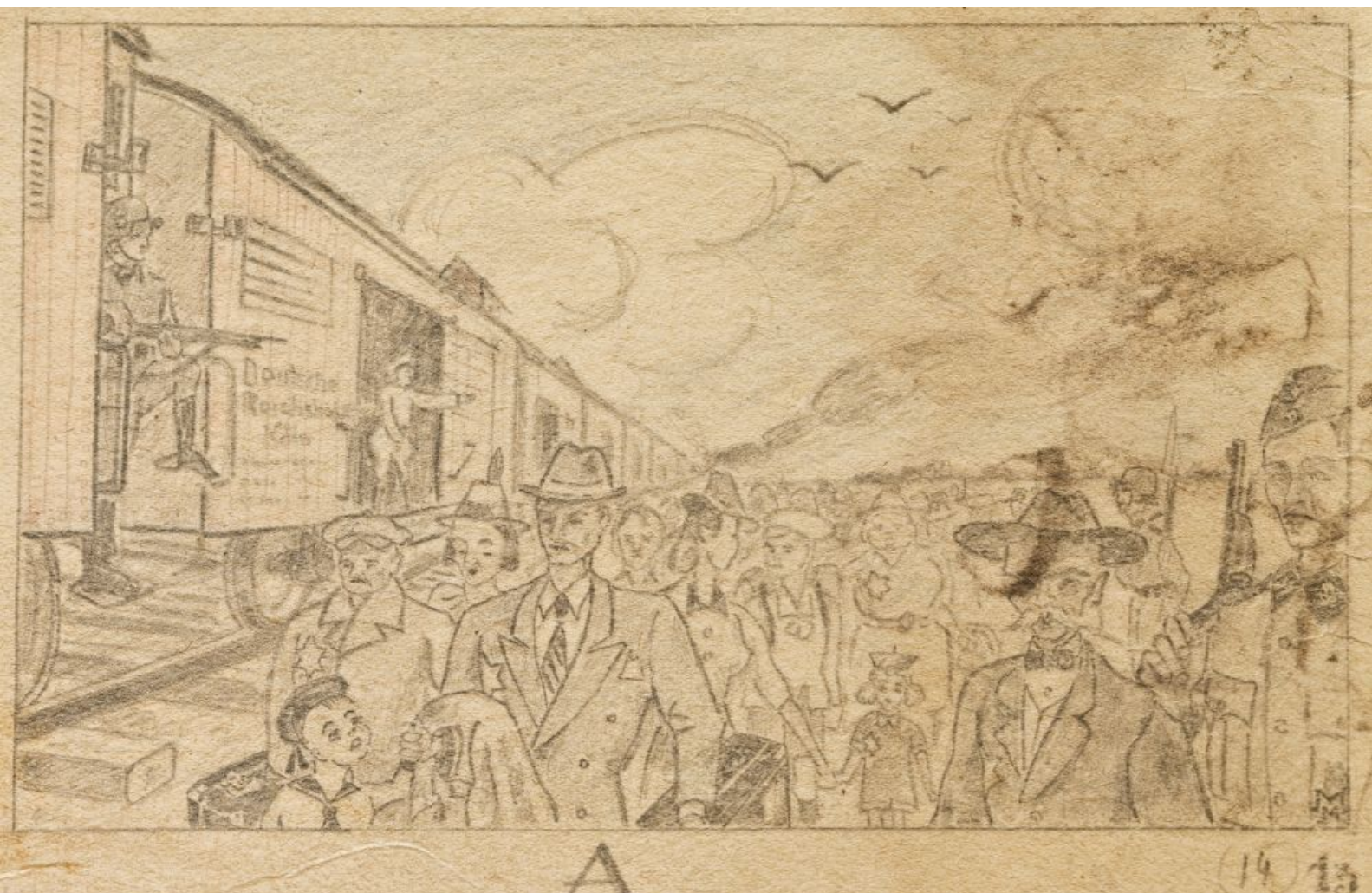
All the recordings are made in the places they mentioned, which on the one hand, is a challenge, but on the other, creates a clear link between history and the present. At the site of the Red House, the first makeshift gas chamber, one can clearly hear the barking of a dog guarding one of the nearby properties. At the Judenrampe, a railway ramp on the outskirts of the Oświęcim railway station where transports of Jews from all over Europe arrived and where selections took place, it is difficult to avoid the sound of passing cars, despite the little tourist traffic there, unlike the ramp and gate at Birkenau.

The historians from the Museum Research Centre invited to participate in the project talked about the functioning

of the camp and its dual role as a death factory and a labour camp and described the fate of Jews, Poles and Soviet POWs. They also detailed the fate of women and children, as well as minorities, the Roma and Sinti, homosexuals and Jehovah's Witnesses, who did not fit into the Third Reich's model of a citizen and therefore suffered persecution. A separate section was devoted to the fate of women and children at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Standing in a large glass room above the railway gate to Birkenau, from where the SS men had a great view of the ramp and the camp, Piotr Setkiewicz, head of the Research Centre, talked about the perpetrators. Germans who served in the camp rarely personally murdered prisoners and yet were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and often suffered no punishment.

The stories of the objects collected at the Museum lend a human and personal dimension to the camp's history, which often fades away when eclipsed by the enormity of the nightmare. They are the eponymous "silent witnesses to history" that shed light on the fate of individual prisoners through conservators and historians.

Such is the story of a wooden snuff box carved by Bronisław Czech, an outstanding athlete and skier, who presented it to a fellow prisoner. The



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