

# MEMORIA

MEMORY • HISTORY • EDUCATION



**THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCE AND MEMORY BECOMES  
INCREASINGLY EVIDENT.**

**81ST ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ**

**IN MEMORIAM  
EVA SCHLOSS  
(1929-2026)**

**ON TREBLINKA**

**CEIJA STOJKA  
AT THE  
MUSEUM OF  
MODERN ART**

**NEW RESEARCH**

**WORKS BY  
ROMANI ARTIST**

**80 YEARS  
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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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# IN MEMORIAM

## EVA SCHLOSS (1929-2026)

The USC Shoah Foundation mourns the passing of Eva Schloss, a London-based educator, author, and Holocaust survivor who devoted more than four decades to sharing her experiences and confronting hatred, prejudice, and indifference. Schloss passed away on January 3, 2026, at the age of 96.

Over the course of her life, Schloss spoke to thousands of audiences around the world about surviving Auschwitz-Birkenau as a child and teenager. Through her testimony, writing, and public engagement, she was deeply committed to instilling respect for differences and advancing the belief that education is essential to building a safer and more humane world.

"Eva Schloss shared her testimony with the USC Shoah Foundation with remarkable generosity and purpose. Over many years, she helped ensure that future generations would learn not only what happened, but why it matters. We extend our deepest condolences to her family and to all those around the world who were moved and transformed by her words." — Dr. Robert Williams, CEO, USC Shoah Foundation.

Schloss recorded her first testimony for the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive in 1996, preserving her firsthand account for future generations. In 2015, she also participated in the USC Shoah Foundation's Dimensions in Testimony initiative. Her interactive biography is now available in museums worldwide, allowing visitors to continue asking her questions about her life, her survival, and her messages for future generations.

### Posthumous Stepsister to Anne Frank

Schloss first became publicly active in Holocaust remembrance and anti-prejudice education through her involvement with the Anne Frank Trust UK, which she helped establish in 1980. The organization develops educational programs based on The Diary of Anne Frank to empower young people to challenge discrimination and stand up to injustice.

After the war, Schloss's mother, Elfriede (Fritzie), married Otto Frank, the father of Anne and Margot Frank. Otto, who published Anne's diary and became one of the most influential voices in Holocaust remembrance, was a close family friend and later a father figure to Schloss. Through this connection, Schloss became Anne Frank's posthumous stepsister, a role that drew public attention without eclipsing her own powerful voice and experiences.

Schloss authored several books, including *After Auschwitz: A Story of Heartbreak and Survival by the Stepsister of Anne Frank* (2015) and a young adult adaptation published in 2019, offering readers an unflinching yet deeply human account of survival, loss, and moral responsibility.

She often described a pivotal moment in 1985, when she was unexpectedly invited to



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### **Posthumous Stepsister to Anne Frank**

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her mother were displaced across Eastern Europe before eventually learning the war had ended. Schloss was 16. Returning to Amsterdam later that year, they learned that Schloss's father had died on a death march and that her brother Heinz had perished in Mauthausen just days before liberation.

A conversation with Otto Frank about the publication of Anne's diary later helped Schloss recover a memory of her brother telling her he had hidden his artwork and poetry before deportation. Schloss recovered dozens of paintings and hundreds of poems, which she later donated to the Resistance Museum in Amsterdam.

### **Creating a Safer World**

Schloss completed her education in Amsterdam and later moved to London, where she married Zvi Schloss and raised three daughters. For many years, she focused on family and work before embracing her role as a public educator.

From the mid-1980s onward, Schloss became one of the most respected survivor-educators in the world, speaking at schools, museums, and public forums across continents. "I realized the world has to know what happened," she once said. "We have to create a better and safer world." Eva Schloss is survived by her daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Her legacy — preserved through testimony, education, and the countless lives she touched — will continue to shape how future generations understand the past and their responsibility to one another.

May her memory be a blessing. The testimony of Eva Schloss is available on YouTube and through our Archive.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPERIENCE AND MEMORY BECOMES INCREASINGLY EVIDENT.

## 81<sup>ST</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

On January 27, 2026 a group 21 Survivors of Auschwitz gathered at the site of the former Auschwitz camp to commemorate the 81st anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The event was held under the honorary patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland, Karol Nawrocki.

The witnesses to history were accompanied by the President of Poland, as well as Minister of Culture and National Heritage Marta Cienkowska, ambassadors, diplomats, representatives of religious communities, regional and local authorities, donors of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, and staff from museums and memorial sites. The event was hosted by Marek Zając, the Secretary of the International Auschwitz Council.

The main event took place in the historic building of the so-called Central Sauna at the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau camp site. It is located in the immediate vicinity of the ruins of Gas Chamber and Crematorium IV. The original prison uniforms worn by camp inmates were a symbolic element on stage.

The core of the commemoration was the voices of the Survivors, including those present and those who had previously shared their testimonies and memories, expressing their experiences and warnings.

In order to focus entirely on the voices of the Victims and Survivors of Auschwitz, a decision was made to refrain from any political speeches on this day and in this particular place. This decision was unanimously supported by the International Auschwitz Council.

At the beginning, those gathered at the Memorial Site and all viewers of the broadcast heard an excerpt from

a profound testimony. Załmen Gradowski, a Polish Jew, was deported to Auschwitz from the Grodno Ghetto with his entire family. His loved ones, including his parents and wife, were murdered in the gas chamber immediately after their arrival at the camp. Gradowski, assigned to the Sonderkommando—a special group of prisoners forced to work in the gas chambers and crematoria—sought to inform the world about the mass murder. He secretly wrote notes that became a shocking literary record of the tragedy.

A moving excerpt from his text written in Auschwitz—a unique appeal to the Moon—was read by actor Michał Żebrowski:

"How can you wander about, dreamy, lovesick, enchanted as before, and not feel the terrible annihilation, the great misfortune brought down by them, the murderers and pirates of the world? How can you not feel? Do you not miss the millions of

81.  
rocznica  
wyzwolenia  
Auschwitz



# 81. rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz



world? ...Come, moon; cast a glance from your shining eyes on this cursed dark earth...”.

During the commemoration, Auschwitz Survivor Bernard Offen addressed the audience.

“I am almost 97 years young, and I am a survivor of five camps including this one. Why do I mention those days? When you survive the Holocaust, when each day was a struggle to stay alive, you realize that each day of life is precious,” he said.

During his speech Bernard Offen recalled the moment on the Auschwitz ramp when he was separated from his father: “My father was sent to the left, toward death, and I was sent to the right. I remember that moment—our eye contact and the feeling that we were seeing each other for the last time. He was sent to his death and I was given a chance to live. Then they tattooed a number on my forearm and

I was transferred to a transit camp. There, when I asked what had happened to my father, my fellow prisoners replied that he was turned into smoke. It took me some time to understand what that meant.”

In his speech Bernard Offen also shared a reflection directed toward the future: “Today, as I look at contemporary times, I see many signs I know all too well. I see hatred resurgent. I see violence beginning to be justified once again. I see people who believe their anger is more valuable than another human life. I say this because I am an old man who has seen where indifference leads to. And I say this because I believe—I truly believe—that we can choose differently.”

“I ask you today, let memory not be a burden. Let it be a light that guides us in the darkness. We, the witnesses, will soon pass away, but I believe this light will remain with you,” Bernard Offen emphasized.

The commemoration event also included a film featuring short reflections by Survivors on the significance of memory in the contemporary world. They included Irene Weiss, Eva Szepesi, Lidia Maksymowicz, Janina Iwańska, Eva Umlauf, Barbara Wojnarowska-Gautier, Zdzisława Włodarczyk, Leon Weintraub,

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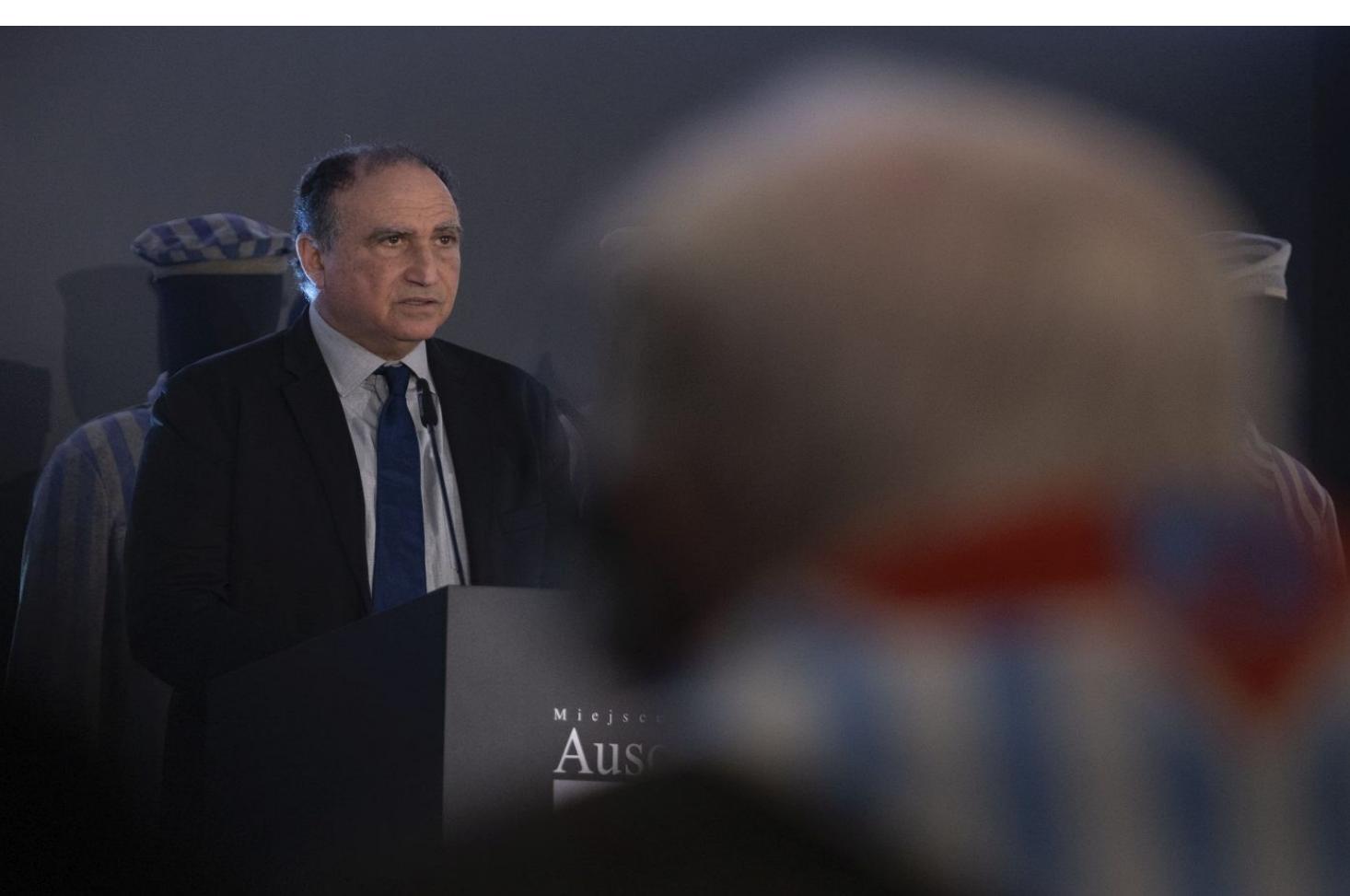
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entire systems of rules and values are collapsing before our eyes. Today, the importance of experience and Memory becomes increasingly evident, as we more frequently encounter situations that are unexpected, unpredictable, and incomprehensible. Therefore, we must rely on experience and its twin: Memory,” Piotr Cywiński said.

“Your experience, Dear Ones, so profoundly painful and difficult, so cruel and nearly unfathomable, has become the foundation of our Memory. And thus today, amidst the storms of present challenges and threats, it is our treasure, our signpost, our suggestions, our warning. It is our power, both individually and collectively. Therefore, each day should begin with a feeling of gratitude, ours toward you – the Survivors,” he added.

“For if we were to reject Memory and experience, we would soon again, like Załmen Gradowski, accuse even the moon of indifference, begging it to ‘Come, moon; cast a glance from your shining eyes on this cursed dark earth!’” he concluded.

Following the speeches, prayers were recited by: rabbi Tomer Rehovi, bishop Roman Pindel, bishop Adrian Korczago and hegumen Aleksander.

Symbolic candles—lit with a flame passed on by the Survivors—were placed:

- at the monument commemorating the victims of the camp by the President of Poland Karol Nawrocki;
- at the remains of the so-called Bunker II by Wojciech Soczewica, Director General of the Auschwitz-Birkenau together with Yossi Matias and Rowan Burnett from Google on behalf of the donors of the Foundation;
- at the ruins of Gas Chamber and Crematorium IV by Minister of Culture and National Heritage Marta Cienkowska, together with Piotr Cywiński and Marek Zając.

The commemoration event included compositions by two Auschwitz survivors Artur Krzeptuski, Józef Kropiński, as well as Victor Ullmann and Gideon Klein who were murdered in the camp. The pieces were performed by Aleksandra Marchewka.

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

A human being facing unexpected,  
unpredictable and incomprehensible events  
relies heavily on experience.

It is in experience that one seeks points of reference, guidance, and rescue.  
A human being without experience is helpless.  
Experience is a force.

In times of rapid change, in periods of instability,  
in moments that are dangerous, unpredictable, and difficult to grasp,  
we all seek refuge, points of reference, and help in Memory.

Memory assists in discernment,  
in avoiding threats,  
in choosing directions, and in making conscious decisions.  
Memory is our stronghold, our support,  
the source from which we judge the most difficult situations.  
From it arises the necessity and hierarchy of our steps and actions.

Memory is a power.  
Exactly like experience.

Memory and experience are, in essence, twin concepts  
as alike as only twins can be.  
They are treasures, signposts, suggestions and warnings.

Today we live in difficult times,  
when an order built through immense effort is fracturing,  
when international law is violated,  
and when entire systems of rules and values are collapsing before our eyes.  
Today, the importance of experience and Memory becomes increasingly evident,  
as we more frequently encounter situations  
that are unexpected, unpredictable, and incomprehensible.

Therefore, we must rely on experience and its twin: Memory.

Memory is not a burden; it guides us toward meaning.  
Memory does not arise from obligation, but rather multiplies possibilities.  
Memory should be regarded not as a lesson to be completed,  
but as a source of genuine support, reinforcement,  
of enhancing awareness,  
and expanding and deepening our understanding.

Only one who does not value experience will also fail to value Memory.

Your experience, Dear Ones,  
so profoundly painful and difficult,  
so cruel and nearly unfathomable,  
has become the foundation of our Memory.  
And thus today, amidst the storms of present challenges and threats,  
it is our treasure, our signpost, our suggestions, our warning.  
It is our power, both individually and collectively.

Therefore, each day should begin  
with a feeling of gratitude, ours toward you - the Survivors.

For if we were to reject Memory and experience,  
we would soon again,  
like Załmen Gradowski,  
accuse even the moon of indifference,  
begging it to  
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# CALL FOR PAPERS

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

### “DOCUMENTING THE HOLOCAUST: TESTIMONIES AS HISTORICAL EVIDENCE”

The organizers invite submissions for an international conference devoted to Holocaust testimonies produced during the World War II and in the immediate postwar period.

The Collection of Holocaust Survivors' Testimonies held at the Jewish Historical Institute represents one of the earliest systematic efforts to locate and record survivors' individual experience. It is, however, only one of many such collections. Over the years, various institutions have initiated projects to gather Holocaust survivors' testimonies and memoirs, creating a rich yet methodologically complex body of sources.

The aim of the conference is to examine these testimonies as historical evidence by exploring their possibilities, limitations, the contexts in which they were produced, and their subsequent uses in scholarship, education, and commemoration. We welcome contributions that critically engage with early Holocaust testimonies and situate them within broader historiographical, methodological, and ethical debates. The conference will devote particular attention to audiovisual testimonies of Holocaust survivors.

We invite also papers that address the specific methodological, interpretive, and ethical challenges posed by video testimony. Contributions may explore the relationship between early written accounts and later recorded narratives, as well as in which retrospective narration shapes survivor testimony over time. Papers may also analyse the role of video testimonies in historical research, museum exhibitions, and public history, and reflect on the ethical considerations involved in their collection, and dissemination.

#### **Possible topics include**

#### **(but are not limited to):**

- Collection of Holocaust Survivors' Testimonies of the Jewish Historical Institute Archive: history, scope, and significance
- Testimonies recorded during the war and in the immediate postwar years
- Jewish historical committees and early documentation initiatives
- Testimony as a historical source: methodology and interpretation
- Narrative forms, language, and silence in survivor accounts
- The relationship between memory, trauma, and historical writing
- Comparative perspectives on early Holocaust documentation
- Testimonies and the reconstruction of local histories
- Ethical issues arising from the use of testimonies
- Video testimonies: audiovisual narration, interviewing practices, and historical analysis
- Reflection on new analytical technologies and directions, primarily in the field of computational science.

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- Narrative forms, language, and silence in survivor accounts
- The relationship between memory, trauma, and historical writing



**CALL FOR PAPERS**

# NEW RESEARCH ON TREBLINKA

On January 14–15, 2026, the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, in cooperation with the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure, organized an international scholarly workshop entitled New Research on the Treblinka Labour Camp and Treblinka Death Camp.

The event took place in Warsaw and at the Treblinka Museum and brought together researchers and practitioners from Poland, Germany, Israel, Denmark, and the United States.

The primary objective of the workshop was to present and critically discuss innovative methodological and interpretative approaches to the study of both Treblinka I, the forced labour camp, and Treblinka II, the extermination camp. The meeting aimed to integrate new archival discoveries, spatial and visual analysis, perpetrator studies, and research on resistance and survival into a broader, interdisciplinary framework. A further key goal was to connect current academic research with the development of the new permanent exhibition at the Treblinka Museum, strengthening the relationship between scholarship, commemoration, and public education.

## Opening Session

The workshop was opened by **Dr. Michał Trębacz**, Director of the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, who emphasized the importance of international collaboration and the need for ongoing research related to Treblinka.

**Dr. David Silberklang** (Yad Vashem, International Treblinka Council) highlighted the significance of Treblinka within Holocaust research and stressed the importance of communicating to a broader audience that Treblinka also represents the destruction of thousands of shtetls (small Jewish town or village in eastern Europe).



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### **First panel**

The first panel introduced innovative approaches to visual and symbolic interpretations of Treblinka:

- **Dr. Agnieszka Kajczyk** presented a newly discovered photographic negative attributed to Jakub Byk, offering a rare and critical reflection on the status of images as historical testimony. Her work demonstrated how visual sources can reshape understandings of the physical and emotional landscape surrounding post-war Treblinka.
- **Dr. Annika Wienert** examined the challenges of representing Treblinka II from an art-historical perspective. Her contribution highlighted the tensions between absence, abstraction, and material traces in visual and spatial representations of extermination sites.
- **Prof. Elżbieta Janicka** analyzed the symbolic topography of the Treblinka museum sites, focusing on patterns of denialism and selective memory in public narratives and commemorative practices.

The discussion emphasized the innovative use of visual culture, spatial theory, and memory studies to interrogate how Treblinka is seen, interpreted, and commemorated in both scholarly and public contexts.

### **Second panel**

The second panel shifted attention to perpetrator studies and the historical marginalization of the labour camp Treblinka I.

- **Michał Kowalski** presented new research on Treblinka I, challenging its long-standing marginalization in Holocaust historiography. His work foregrounded the camp's role within the broader system of violence, forced labour, and mass murder.
- **Dr. Anders Otte Stensager** introduced new biographical research on key perpetrators: Franz Stangl and Christian Wirth. By combining archival research with digital and transnational methodologies, he demonstrated how individual life trajectories illuminate the institutional and ideological structures of the Nazi killing system.

This panel underscored the innovative integration of microhistorical biography with systemic analysis, contributing to a more complex understanding of agency, responsibility, and institutional violence.

### **Third panel**

# A PROCEDURE RESIDES IN ITS ETHICS BEHAVIOR IN THE OPERATING ROOM

Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) promotes ethical leadership for today's professionals through annual fellowships, ethical leadership trainings, and symposia, among other means. Each year, FASPE awards 80 to 90 fellowships to graduate students and early-career professionals in six fields: Business, Clergy & Religious Leaders, Design & Technology, Journalism, Law, and Medicine. Fellowships begin with immersive, site-specific study in Germany and Poland, including at Auschwitz and other historically significant sites associated with Nazi-era professionals. While there, fellows study Nazi-era professionals' surprisingly mundane and familiar motivations and decision-making as a reflection-based framework to apply to ethical pitfalls in their own lives. We find that the power of place translates history into the present, creating urgency in ethical reflection.

Each month one of our fellows publishes a piece in *Memoria*. Their work reflects FASPE's unique approach to professional ethics and highlights the need for thoughtful ethical reflection today.

Surgery is rich with bioethical considerations because it is a universally dramatic and intrusive field. Stripped of everything from personal belongings to consciousness itself, even the thickest-skinned person becomes vulnerable on the way to the operating table. In the ensuing hours, while the patient is under anesthesia, both the miraculous and the tragic hang in the balance. The surgeon carefully resects diseased tissue, after which they suture the healthy tissue's bleeding edges back together. This cycle of destruction and reconstruction repeats itself until finally the blade is removed and the skin is sealed. The patient awakens to a body that has been irreversibly altered, for better or worse. It is literally a life-altering experience.

In this light, the operating room (OR) is far from sterile. It has tremendous potential to become the frontier for novel and creative ethical developments, including possible failings. Aware of these dangers, the American College of Surgeons issued its "Statement of Principles Underlying Perioperative Responsibility" in 1996, then an updated version in 2016. This document outlines topics such as informed consent, disclosure of therapeutic options and errors, conflicts of interest, and follow-up care<sup>1</sup>. While the document explicitly warns to, "[b]e sensitive and respectful of patients, understanding their vulnerability during the perioperative period," there is a paucity of other literature that deals with matters taking place inside the OR. Partly this is due to the macabre subject matter. Although people readily discuss clinical issues, such as informed consent and admitting errors, they are more squeamish about evaluating the minutiae of surgical ethics. The media also skews and limits the public perception of the OR—the surgeon with his or her imperturbable gaze, constantly performing heroic, brilliant maneuvers as blood pools from invisible or unreachable sources. This simplified portrayal often stands in the way of understanding just how behaviorally complex and dynamic the OR can be.

Moreover, the OR is an autonomous and private space. It requires strict access privileges to enter. The only non-staff person in the room, the patient, is often under anesthesia. To

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a slim reed to rely on. Using this historical example, this paper aims to describe how procedures that are not guided by an ethical framework are capable of immense harm and offers perioperative considerations that ought to supplement the "ACS Statement of Principles in Surgery." Specifically, it addresses three fundamental components of modern surgery that have the potential to cause unintended harm: 1) sterile positioning and preparation methods; 2) the development of and reliance on muscle memory; and 3) the use of anesthesia during procedures.

### **Preparation and Positioning**

Most people believe that an operation begins with the first incision. For the surgeon, this may be true. For the patient, however, the automatic and unvaried sequence of events that comprise the operation begins immediately after entering the OR. The patient is first asked to identify himself and the operation that he will be having. Staff then ask him to lie down on the operating table, which marks his final conscious act before being anesthetized, paralyzed, and intubated. Even after having observed this process numerous times, I am still struck by the diverging interpretations of these events by the patient and the OR staff. The patient always perceives this experience as special or unique, because, for the patient, it is. But for the OR staff, it is as routine as sitting down at one's desk and turning on the computer screen first thing in the morning.

As a medical student on my cardiac-surgery rotation, I began my tasks as soon as the patient was anesthetized. I removed the blankets and the hospital gown from their body. I peeled off their socks. I placed and secured a Foley tube catheter in the urethra to drain the bladder. Then, I used an electric razor to shave the chest, armpits, groins, and legs, occasionally stopping to lift clumps of free hair with a thick roll of silk tape. Once done, I scrubbed the body with sponges soaked in cold, soapy water. I dried off the patient with sterile towels and then placed sterile drapes across him or her from head to toe. At this point, the surgeon would step in to feel for the relevant bony anatomical landmarks and use a marker to outline the points of incision. The process of transforming an awake, speaking patient into a ventilator-dependent, sterile body with ink markings on it takes about an hour on average.

a slim reed to rely on. Using this historical example, this paper aims to describe how procedures that are not guided by an ethical framework are capable of immense harm and offers perioperative considerations that ought to supplement the “ACS Statement of Principles in Surgery.” Specifically, it addresses three fundamental components of modern surgery that have the potential to cause unintended harm: 1) sterile positioning and preparation methods; 2) the development of and reliance on muscle memory; and 3) the use of anesthesia during procedures.

### **Preparation and Positioning**

Most people believe that an operation begins with the first incision. For the surgeon, this may be true. For the patient, however, the automatic and unvaried sequence of events that comprise the operation begins immediately after entering the OR. The patient is first asked to identify himself and the operation that he will be having. Staff then ask him to lie down on the operating table, which marks his final conscious act before being anesthetized, paralyzed, and intubated. Even after having observed this process numerous times, I am still struck by the diverging interpretations of these events by the patient and the OR staff. The patient always perceives this experience as special or unique, because, for the patient, it is. But for the OR staff, it is as routine as sitting down at one’s desk and turning on the computer screen first thing in the morning.

As a medical student on my cardiac-surgery rotation, I began my tasks as soon as the patient was anesthetized. I removed the blankets and the hospital gown from their body. I peeled off their socks. I placed and secured a Foley tube catheter in the urethra to drain the bladder. Then, I used an electric razor to shave the chest, armpits, groins, and legs, occasionally stopping to lift clumps of free hair with a thick roll of silk tape. Once done, I scrubbed the body with sponges soaked in cold, soapy water. I dried off the patient with sterile towels and then placed sterile drapes across him or her from head to toe. At this point, the surgeon would step in to feel for the relevant bony anatomical landmarks and use a marker to outline the points of incision. The process of transforming an awake, speaking patient into a ventilator-dependent, sterile body with ink markings on it takes about an hour on average. All this happens prior to first incision. For most of that hour, the patient is unconscious and uncovered.

In the OR, the sterile field is sacred. The act of removing clothes, shaving, scrubbing, and draping the patient seems ethical, lifesaving in its purpose. In surgery, these are necessary steps to prevent infection, but the actions are not always benign, and this noble context is not something that we can take for granted. Similar acts, although with a completely different purpose, formed a series of initiatory humiliations for newly arrived prisoners at Auschwitz and other concentration camps by the Schutzstaffel (SS), the Nazi paramilitary organization. In their scheme, the act of cleansing the prisoners’ bodies carried darker connotations. One of their victims, Marianne F., described the experience of undressing completely in front of the SS prior to entering the shower or “sauna,” having all of her bodily hair shaved, and lastly being tattooed with a number<sup>2</sup>. Everyone underwent the same process regardless of their age, sex, or desired degree of modesty, rendered equal in the process of becoming nothing. In his book, “Auschwitz: A Doctor’s Eyewitness Account”, Miklos Nyiszli, a prisoner at Auschwitz and himself a doctor who was eventually forced to work with the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele, recalls entering a room labeled “Baths & Disinfection,” where he was undressed, washed, rubbed with noxious chemicals, and tattooed. In a moment of solemn awareness, he writes that “Dr. Miklos Nyiszli had ceased to exist, [and had now become] merely KZ prisoner Number A-8450.”<sup>3</sup>.

This history reminds us that the acts of removing clothing, washing hair, and labelling the human body cannot only sterilize but also dehumanize. In surgery most of these steps cannot be modified, as they are necessary to prevent infection. However, by consciously acknowledging the patient’s perspective—the deep vulnerability of the experience—surgeons and other OR staff can preserve their patients’ dignity and modesty. Empathy can

imagine—naked—nothing burns. How does one manage to [burn] this?”. It seems absurd to ponder the best way to burn dead bodies instead of asking why people had to die, but this is partly how these physicians coped with the overwhelming guilt and psychological torment of participating in such heinous crimes. They evaded ethical considerations by treating them as purely technical and pragmatic concerns.

A similar phenomenon occurred among Nazi doctors who were hungry for surgical experience. In the name of mastering technical skills, they operated on prisoners suffering from their conditions of interest. Ethics aside, they felt that they had found an ideal surgical laboratory, constituting a Faustian bargain that marked their regression into automatons, ready to apply their skills to any operation regardless of its morality.

While certainly in no way equivalent to the conditions under which surgeons normally find themselves, the tendency to focus on technique alone, even at Auschwitz, can nevertheless serve as a cautionary tale.

It is a common tendency in modern surgery to focus too much on the technical aspects. Some degree of this may be inevitable for trainee doctors so that they might master certain skills. But doing so can also lead to a lack of ethical awareness, which only comes into view when the surgeon or surgeon-in-training bears in mind the greater context. Without awareness of the purpose and goals of a procedure, one cannot ascertain if a procedure is being used to heal or harm. One runs the risk of merely being a technician on autopilot. As physicians, we hold the responsibility of safeguarding our patients’ and communities’ well-being. A part of that responsibility is always ensuring a meaningful application of our skills.

### **Anesthesia**

Patients whom I cared for in the OR were usually under strong anesthesia. I found this surprisingly comforting. Not only did it mitigate my fear of causing pain during procedures, but it also shielded me from the unnerving prospect of making a mistake that, in the case of conscious patients, would lead to increased suffering for them and shame for me. It also liberated the medical staff to discuss topics, even humorous or inappropriate ones, which were unrelated to the operation, instead of worrying about how our talk would be received by the patient. In other words, we could act as if the patient were not there at all.

Studies have noted how surgeons’ speech, behavior, and even teaching methods can drastically change when patients are under anesthesia<sup>6</sup>. In an article in the American Journal of Surgery, Claire Smith and fellow researchers, for example, have proposed surgeon-patient communication guidelines to balance patient comfort with teaching and operative efficacy<sup>7</sup>. I was not aware of how much I relied on anesthesia to shield me from the psychological stress of being around fully conscious patients until I interacted with waking patients during minimally invasive procedures. Even when it came to innocuous chores, such as washing a patient’s body, I found I experienced a substantially greater degree of empathy with awake patients and frequently felt compelled to ask them how they were doing. In contrast to working with anaesthetized patients, for example, I always made sure to use warm water to scrub their bodies so that they would not feel cold. I shaved more cautiously to avoid razor burns. Instead of joking with my coworkers, I had conversations with the patients themselves. This led me to realize that knowing that I was dealing with a human body was not enough to arouse empathy in me. Rather, my empathy seemed to vary significantly depending on the degree of patient awareness.

Anesthesia diminishes patient sensation, but, just as potently, it can reduce physician empathy. At Auschwitz, physicians found reassurance in and strongly adhered to the false belief that Zyklon-B that contained hydrogen cyanide, caused a painless death. Rudolf Höss, the commandant of Auschwitz, remarked that “[t]he doctors explained to me that the prussic acid [Zyklon-B] had a paralyzing effect on the lungs [...] that was so quick and strong that death

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# BRAZIL : BUILDING CITIZENSHIP THROUGH MEMORY

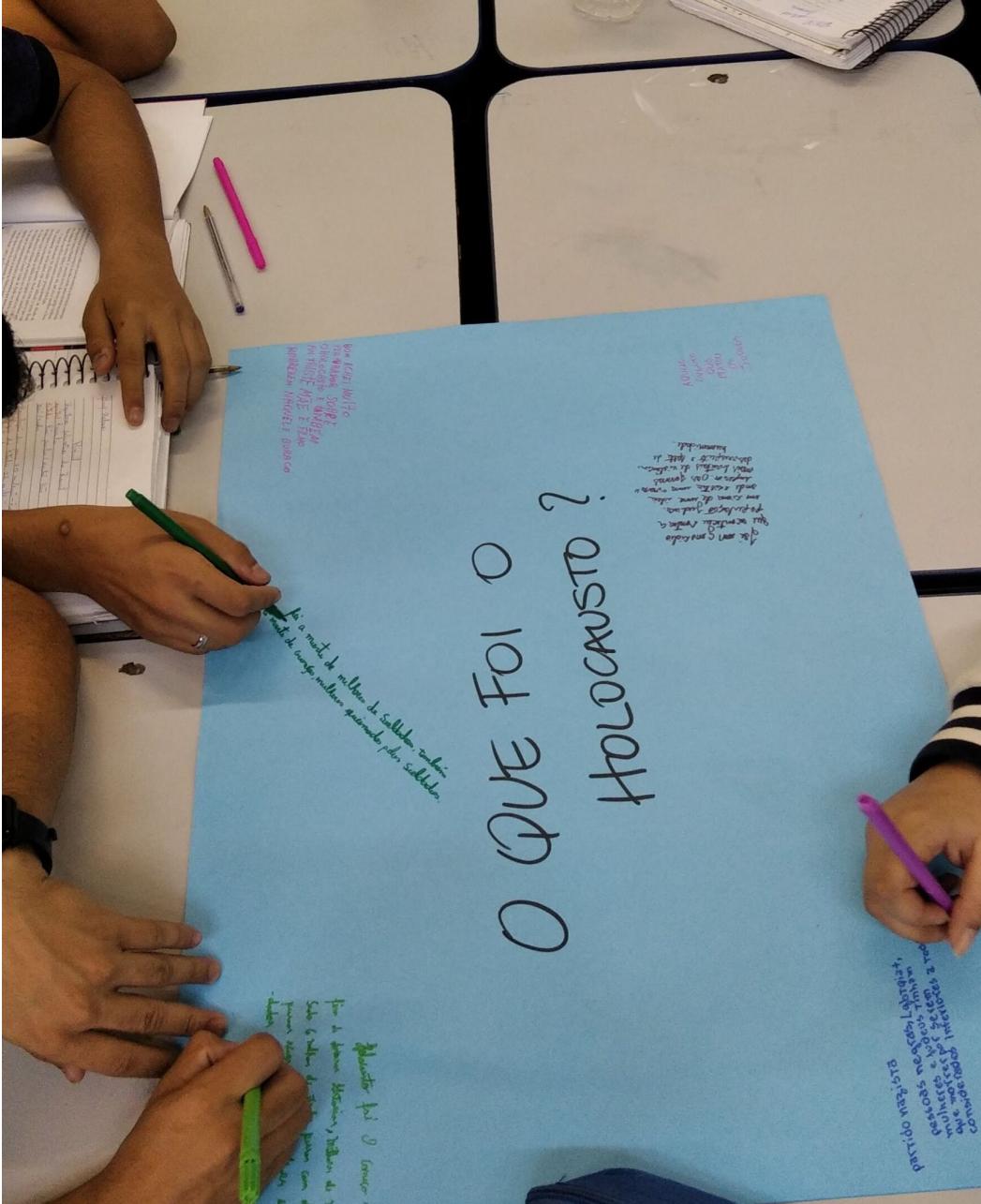
In Jahu, a small town in Brazil, education extends beyond textbooks and standardized curricula. PEI José Nicolau Pirágine is a fulltime school in the public education system. There are approximately 400 students, who spend 9 hours daily learning and are away from the potential problems that a vulnerable community can bring.

As a humanities teacher, and a PhD student in the field of Holocaust studies, our work is to engage with history's darkest chapters to illuminate the path toward a more just and humane future. Central to this mission is the study of the Holocaust, as a critical lens for understanding antisemitism, citizenship, ethics, and human rights today.

Our pedagogical approach is inspired by international best practices, such as those outlined in the IHRA Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust, Yad Vashem Educational Guidelines and more. We believe in fostering responsible citizens. Students must confront the complex mechanisms of prejudice, state-sponsored violence, and the erosion of democratic values. Our school integrates interdisciplinary perspectives, combining literature, history, philosophy, and art.

This commitment materializes in elective courses like "Narratives of War — Memory, History, and Reflection." Here, students engage directly with the voices of the past. Through diaries like Anne Frank's and testimonies like Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*, they learn facts and encounter individual humanity amidst inhumanity. We make sure victims are remembered as people with lives, hopes, and identities, not just





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The course structure promotes active, critical thinking. Students analyze historical contexts, discuss the roles of perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers, and are then encouraged to become authors of their own narratives, writing personal journals that

# WORKS BY ROMANI ARTIST CEIJA STOJKA AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MSN)

The Warsaw Ghetto Museum invites visitors to the exhibition “The Women Question 1550–2025,” presented at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw since November 21, 2025. Among the works of nearly 150 women artists, the exhibition features paintings by the Romani artist Ceija Stojka from the collection of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum: *Dressage* (2001) and *Quand les corbeaux ont faim, ils viennent sur la terre* (When the crows are hungry, they come down to earth, 2001).

Ceija Stojka was born in 1933 in Kraubath, Austria. She was ten years old when she, together with her mother and five siblings, was deported to KL Auschwitz, to the Zigeunerlager—the so-called “Gypsy camp” established in Auschwitz II-Birkenau, where Roma and Sinti families from across Europe were imprisoned from 1943 onward. She was later transferred to the Ravensbrück and Bergen-Belsen camps. Out of her extended family of around two hundred people, only she, her mother, and four siblings survived the war.

More than forty years after the end of the war, Ceija Stojka broke her silence. In 1988, her first book “Wir leben im Verborgenen” (We live in seclusion) was published. She also began to paint, developing a distinctive artistic language marked by sensitive color palettes, symbolic compositions, and strong emotional expression. She was 55 years old at the time.

The two works from the Warsaw Ghetto Museum collection presented in the exhibition are powerful documents of the Romani experience of extermination, created by a Survivor. In *Dressage*, a tightly compressed group of women is confronted by two black figures shown from behind. Next to one sits a black dog, and a whip lies on the snow-covered ground. In *Quand les corbeaux ont faim, ils viennent sur la terre*, a group of crowded women prisoners faces a female guard striking a bent woman in a black dress with a sweeping motion of a whip. The scene’s dynamism is intensified by the silhouettes of black birds against the sky.

The exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw runs until May 3, 2026. Curated by art historian Alison M. Gingeras, it challenges the myth of women artists’ absence from art history.

Structured as a nine-part visual narrative, it testifies to the enduring and dynamic creative presence of women over the last 500 years.



Ceija Stojka – „Dressage“, MSN Collection

# CALL FOR ARTICLES 2027

## NUMBERS AND ESTIMATES IN HOLOCAUST RESEARCH: LIMITATIONS, RISKS, AND PROSPECTS

Debates surrounding the Holocaust frequently involve disputes over estimates and numerical data such as, among others, the victims of concentration and extermination camps, the Jedwabne massacre, the number of Poles who denounced and murdered Jews, or conversely, those who rescued them and faced punishment as a consequence. As these issues have become deeply politicized, a cognitive dissonance has emerged: on the one hand, claims have circulated about millions of Poles involved in aiding Jews; on the other, approximately 200,000 or more Poles have been implicated in their mass murder—with each position invoking analyses and source-based data.

Quantitative research aimed at verifying estimates found in both the scholarship and public discourse, and, above all, at providing data that may serve as a basis for new hypotheses, is characterized by numerous limitations. These include gaps in the source material and, at times, its limited reliability or accidental character. Moreover, numbers alone cannot explain the phenomena under examination and must be supplemented by qualitative research. In both cases, a critical approach to the sources is essential as is the setting aside of emotions, the development and application of appropriate research methods, and the creation of a space for academic debate.

In the forthcoming issue of *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i Materiały* (Holocaust: Studies and Materials), we invite a critical reflection on estimates and numerical data in Holocaust research. Our interest extends not only to the territories of occupied Poland and Polish debates, but also to a broadly understood international perspective. We welcome contributions from scholars working on quantitative methodologies—including analysts, statisticians, and demographers—as well as researchers addressing specific issues through quantitative approaches. We also invite submissions discussing the significance of such research, its difficulties, limits, risks, and the manipulations to which quantitative findings may be subjected. We further encourage texts that synthesize and assess the debates conducted to date.

**Suggested thematic areas include:**

- Reflections on the sources used in the quantification of aspects surrounding the Holocaust, including the usefulness and limitations of documents produced during the war and occupation
- The role of databases and new analytical tools in deepening and expanding knowledge about the number of Holocaust victims
- Considerations on the definitions of individuals and phenomena being quantified
- Controversies surrounding the number of Holocaust victims in general and the victims of specific crimes committed during the Holocaust
- The significance of numerical data in postwar debates on the Holocaust and the



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- Controversies surrounding the number of Holocaust victims in general and the victims of specific crimes committed during the Holocaust
- The significance of numerical data in postwar debates on the Holocaust and the involvement of Poles in rescuing or denouncing/killing Jews
- The limits of quantifying social phenomena: what can and cannot be counted or estimated?
- Blind spots in quantitative research: aspects that have yet to be studied, as well as numbers that have remained unchallenged in academic discussions
- The problem of extrapolating data from smaller samples to larger populations, or from one region to another

In addition to articles focused on the main theme of the issue, we also accept manuscripts dealing with authors' current research, including the presentation of newly discovered archival sources.

**Manuscript submission timeline and procedure**

May 15, 2026 – deadline for submitting article proposals, which should contain:

- an overview of the article, including the title, main theses, methodology, and sources; up to 1,800 characters,

- Going beyond these limits is possible only in special cases and only after prior contact with the editorial staff and its consent.

### **Graphic materials**

- It is possible to include photographs, artwork, graphs, and maps. In the paper edition, they are printed in greyscale.
- It is necessary to specify their source and provide a caption in the form compliant with the copyright holder's requirements. The text author is also required to specify the kind of copyright and obtain it.
- Graphic materials are to be submitted in separate files in the jpg format (photographs, illustrations) or pdf format (graphs, maps) in resolution no lower than 300 dpi.

### **Text formatting and technical requirements**

- file format – MS Word (doc or docx) / OpenOffice (odt),
- font: Times New Roman, size 12, adjusted, 1.5 interspaces,
- headings and subheadings: in bold, adjusted to the left,
- margins: 2.5 centimeters,
- footnotes: continuous, font size 10, single line spacing,
- file title: surname and the first two words of the title divided by underscores (without Polish diacritic marks), for instance, Surname\_First\_Words.doc

### **Additional requirements**

- On the title page adjusted to the left:
  - o full name
  - o affiliation
  - o ORCID
  - o e-mail
  - o summary of the article (up to 600 words) containing general information about the text and a description of the issues brought up, main theses, and conclusions. list of up to 8 keywords.
  - o In case of a review below the author's data please insert the bibliographic details of the book reviewed in this format: "Review: author or editor, title, place of publication, publisher, publication year, number of pages."
  - At the end of the text please include:
    - o The bibliography of the works cited (Archival Sources, followed by Studies, and Websites). Important: both in the footnotes and in the Bibliography please insert the author's/editor's full name and the publisher.
    - o Note about the author.

### **Optional:**

# ZAGŁADA ŻYDÓW

*Studia i Materiały*



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# 80 YEARS OF MUSEUM AT MAJDANEK

The State Museum at Majdanek is the world first institution established on the grounds of a former camp. Over the eight decades, the Museum has undergone a remarkable transformation and evolved both as a repository of material traces of the past, and as a living institution that responds to social change, rises to new challenges, and sets benchmarks in the field of historical museology.

Its conservation, exhibition, educational, scholarly, and publishing activities are presented in our newest publication entitled „The State Museum at Majdanek 1944–2024. An Illustrated History.”

The book paints a chronological portrait of the institution’s development that is illustrated mainly with the archival museum’s photographic collections, which „breathe life into the names that appear in the documents and scholarly publications and transform the realities of the events described from abstractions into vivid images. In the emotions captured in these photographs – emotions absent from the chroniclers’ records – the story finds its full voice: the terror of the first visitors, the deep emotion of former prisoners attending commemorative ceremonies, and the joy of museum staff receiving recognition for their work” – as stated in the „Forward.”

By means of over 350 photographs, the book documents the collective efforts of many generations: former prisoners, early staff members, researchers, educators, and supporters both in Poland and abroad. The pictures illustrate not only the historical record, but also the breadth of functions and responsibilities embraced by the Museum, which combines scholarly research and public education with a commitment to the preservation of memory.



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