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# MEMORIA

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## NEW ONLINE LESSON AND PODCAST FOCUS ON STRATEGIES OF HOLOCAUST DENIERS

NEW COLLECTIONS  
PORTAL – THE  
RICH HERITAGE OF  
POLISH JEWS  
ONLINE!

OF THE  
LIBERATION OF  
MAUTHAUSEN-  
-GUSEN

INAUGURATION  
OF THE EHRI  
POLISH NATIONAL  
NODE

'YAD VASHEM WAY'  
INAUGURATED  
TODAY  
IN NEW YORK CITY

80. ANNIVERSARY

THE

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'YAD VASHEM WAY' INAUGURATED TODAY  
IN NEW YORK CITY



With great sadness, we received information about the passing of Auschwitz Survivor Marian Turski, historian, journalist, and member of the International Auschwitz Council.

Marian Turski was born on June 26, 1926, as Moshe Turbowicz in Druskininkai. During World War II, he was displaced to the Litzmannstadt ghetto and later deported to Auschwitz. In January 1945, he was evacuated on a "death march" to the Buchenwald camp. He was liberated in Theresienstadt.

Marian Turski passed away on February 18, 2025. He was 98 years old.

We encourage you to listen to Marian Turski's speech, which he delivered on the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi camp Auschwitz on January 27, 2020.

"If you are indifferent, you will not even notice it when upon your own heads, and upon heads of your descendants, some another Auschwitz falls from the sky."

We remember and learn from his words.

'Education is not just pedagogy in the sense of "how to convince" and "how to teach." It is, most of all, philosophy. Therefore, if I may say something to educators: whatever you teach, whatever you say, remember that values in hell and that in normal life are different. One cannot assess events in hell on the principles of a normal moral code.'

Marian Turski

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# TESTIMONY OF MARIAN TURSKI. 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

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My dear comrades of the camp misery, distinguished guests, esteemed participants, friends.

I am one of the few still alive of those who remained in this place almost until the very last moment before liberation. My so-called evacuation from the Auschwitz camp began on the 18th of January. Over the next six and a half days it would prove a death march for more than half of my fellow prisoners, with whom I marched in a column of six hundred.

In all likelihood, I will not make it to the next commemoration. Such are the laws of nature. Please then forgive me the emotion in what I will now say.

This is something I want to say above all to my daughter, my granddaughter, who I thank for being present here, to my grandson: it concerns mainly those who are the peers of my daughter, of my grandchildren; a new generation, particularly the youngest, those who are younger even than they are.



✧ Polskie Muzeum ✧  
Auschwitz  
[Redacted]  
Birkenau  
✧ State Museum ✧

When the Second World War broke out, I was a teenager. My father was a soldier in the First World War who had received a serious gunshot wound to the lung. It was a dramatic situation for our family. My mother came from the Polish-Lithuanian-Belarusian border, where armies had swept back and forth, plundering, looting, raping, burning villages so as to leave nothing for those who came after them. You might say I knew first-hand from my father and mother what war is. Yet despite everything, although only 20 or 25 years had passed, it seemed as distant as the Polish uprisings of the 19th century; as distant as the French Revolution. But it was only 20 years.

When I meet young people today, I realize that after 75-80 years they seem a little weary of this topic: war, the Holocaust, Shoah, genocide. I understand them. That is why I promise you, young people, that I will not tell you about my suffering. I will not tell you about my experiences, my two death marches, how I ended the war weighing 32kg, exhausted, on the verge of death. I will not talk about the worst of it, that is, the tragedy of parting with loved ones after the selection, when you sensed what awaited them. No, I will not talk about these things. Instead, I would like to talk to you about my daughter's generation, and my grandchildren's generation.

I see that Alexander Van der Bellen, the president of Austria, is among us. You will remember, Mr. President, when you hosted me and the leaders of the International Auschwitz Committee and we talked about those times. At one point you used the phrase: "Auschwitz ist nicht vom Himmel gefallen". Auschwitz did not fall from the sky". This is, to use a phrase of ours, an obvious obviousness. Of course it didn't fall from the sky. Yet while this may seem a banal enough statement, it contains a profound and extremely important and deep cognitive shortcut.

Let us shift our imagination for a moment to Berlin in the early 1930s. We are almost in

the city centre, in a district called Bayerisches Viertel, the Bavarian Quarter. Three stops from Ku'damm; from the zoo. Where the Bayerischer Platz metro is today. And here, one day in the early 1930s, a sign appears on the benches: "Jews may not sit here." "Okay," you might think, "this is unpleasant, it's unfair, it's not nice, but after all there are so many benches around here, you can sit somewhere else, it's fine." This was a district inhabited by German intelligentsia of Jewish origin. Albert Einstein, Nobel laureate Nelly Sachs, the industrialist, politician and Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau lived here. One day a sign appears at the swimming pool. "Jews are forbidden to enter this swimming pool." "Okay," you might think, "this is unpleasant, but Berlin has so many places to swim, so many lakes, canals — it's practically Venice — so you can go and swim somewhere else."

Then another sign appears. "Jews are not allowed to belong to German choral associations." So what? They want to sing and make music? Let them gather together and sing by themselves. Then another sign and order: "Jewish, non-Aryan children are not allowed to play with German, Aryan children." So they can play by themselves. And another. "We sell bread and other food products to Jews only after 5pm." Now this is a real inconvenience because there's less choice, but in the end you can still shop after 5pm.

Attention. Here we start to get used to the idea that you can exclude someone. That you can stigmatise someone. That you can alienate someone. Slowly, gradually, day by day, people begin to get used to it — victims, perpetrators, witnesses, those we call bystanders — all begin to get used to the idea that a minority that gave the world Einstein, Nelly Sachs, Heinrich Heine and the Mendelssohns and many Nobel laureates, is different, that these people can be pushed to the edges of society, that they are strangers, that they spread germs and start epidemics. These terrible, dangerous thoughts are the beginning of what may happen next.

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# NEW ONLINE LESSON AND PODCAST FOCUS ON STRATEGIES OF LIES AND DISTORTION OF HOLOCAUST DENIERS

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**A new online lesson and podcast, prepared by the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust (ICEAH), delve into the strategies employed by Holocaust deniers to spread misinformation and falsehoods about the history of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz. Dr. Igor Bartosik from the Museum Research Center is the author of the lesson. In the "On Auschwitz" podcast he is accompanied by Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz.**

"Holocaust denial is based on negating the very existence of the Holocaust or greatly belittling its significance. It has taken on various forms: from significantly reducing the estimated number of victims, through casting doubt on the existence of gas chambers and extermination camps, to the claim that genocide in German Nazi camps never took place," reads the introduction to the lesson.

"By greatly downplaying or outright repudiating the Holocaust, Holocaust denial de facto seeks to spread antisemitism, which indeed lies at its base, and legitimises neo-Nazi and neo-Fascist opinions in public debate," the lesson explains.

The lesson is divided into chapters that cover various aspects, including Holocaust denial strategies, ideological foundations, and a detailed analysis of specific myths and lies promoted by deniers.

"The lesson is grounded in years of historical research, documents, and testimonies of survivors to expose disinformation and reveal the mechanisms behind the questioning of historical facts. Importantly, the structure of the lesson has been designed to allow for the addition of future content if new forms of Holocaust denial emerge," said Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka, Head of E-learning at ICEAH.

The development of the internet and thus easy access to a very wide variety of materials facilitates the spreading of such ideologies, which is why Holocaust denial can only be countered with constant historical education and the raising of public awareness regarding the significance of the Holocaust.

Deniers describe the work of scholars researching the Holocaust as a 'exceptionally suggestive propaganda war', and all works documenting the leading role of gas chambers in the mass extermination of Jews they describe as 'sponsored publications commissioned most frequently by the foundations and financial organisations of the Jews themselves,' or state institutions 'subordinate to their interests'.



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ONLINE LESSON

PODCAST

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# INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE ISSUES URGENT HOLOCAUST DISTORTION WARNING

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The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is calling on the public to recognize the immediate threat of Holocaust distortion and trivialization, and the importance of remembrance on the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The warning comes against the backdrop of global commemoration events for International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27th January, which will mark one of the last occasions to hear from Holocaust survivors.

On a global level a UNESCO study showed that 16% of all Holocaust-related content across social media is denying or distorting the Holocaust. At the same time reports of antisemitism are at record highs.

The 80th anniversary has fallen during the UK's presidency of the IHRA. The theme of the presidency is "In Plain Sight", highlighting how hatred and indifference allowed such an atrocity to happen right before everyone's eyes.

To date, the UK's chairmanship has launched several flagship projects, including a Holocaust Testimony Portal, an innovative platform which consolidates survivor and refugee testimonies, and a Holocaust in 80 objects digital exhibition, which uses personal artefacts to tell the stories of Holocaust survivors. The ambition of the projects has been to strengthen Holocaust education among younger generations and support efforts to contain Holocaust distortion.

Speaking about Holocaust distortion and International Holocaust Remembrance Day, IHRA Chair and UK Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust issues, Lord Eric Pickles said:

"On the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, it is deeply worrying that the legacy and historical truth of the Holocaust are threatened by distortion. This is not only disrespectful to the memory of the victims and survivors, but it is also a threat to our democracies.

"As an organization dedicated to Holocaust education, remembrance, and research, we encourage the public to learn about the Holocaust from factually accurate sources and take a clear stand against disinformation and distortion. The Holocaust was a watershed moment in our history, and it is everyone's moral responsibility to remember and honour the victims and survivors.

"Holocaust distortion is not a legitimate opinion; it is a prediction of a lie. This year especially, it is more important than ever to honour the remaining survivors,



# NEW COLLECTIONS PORTAL – THE RICH HERITAGE OF POLISH JEWS ONLINE!

The POLIN Museum, in partnership with thirty cultural institutions from across Poland, has created the Collections portal. This comprehensive virtual space offers visitors the opportunity to engage with the history and culture of Polish Jews in an online setting. The portal showcases over 7,000 items, representing the first extensive digital collection of artworks, Judaica, personal memorabilia, and archival materials. Previously dispersed throughout various locations in Poland, these significant items are now gathered in one accessible platform, facilitating a richer understanding of Poland's Jewish heritage.

The POLIN Museum, in collaboration with thirty cultural institutions across Poland, has launched an initiative to create a digital database of objects related to the history and culture of Polish Jews. Thousands of items and documents have been digitised and are now accessible "at the click of a button".

The portal features art from the 19th century to the interwar and post-war periods. Notable pieces include the 1974 painting assemblage titled "Night" by Jonah Stern. The collection also prominently displays contemporary art, such as Braid by Krystyna Piotrowska and works by Wilhelm Sasnal. Additionally, the collection comprises thousands of archival photographs that document the everyday life of Jewish communities in Poland, accompanied by various everyday objects. Noteworthy items include a personal photograph of Augusta née Zamenhof Hermelin with her children, historical objects like a badge





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The Collections portal features 50 oral history recordings that capture the testimonies of individuals whose experiences illuminate the history of Polish Jews. It is a comprehensive knowledge base for various applications, including research, historical analysis, educational purposes, and cultural studies. It caters to anyone interested in Jewish history and culture (and beyond).

“It is an intuitive tool in Polish and English, designed to engage recipients through an attractive and concise visual format. It allows them to explore the narratives surrounding various objects, creators, or phenomena. Furthermore, it provides easy access to collections carefully vetted by experts, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding and enriching knowledge. I am therefore convinced that the Collections portal will cater to a broad audience, including professionals - such as historians and researchers - who will find it a valuable new resource for historical, genealogical, or cultural studies. It will also serve teachers, students, and pupils, providing essential educational material for history, civics, and Polish language lessons. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, it will appeal to

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# 80. ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF MAUTHAUSEN-GUSEN

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**May 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp system. The day of liberation symbolises the end of the crimes committed during the Nazi regime.**

Every year in May we remember the victims at the sites of the former concentration camps. But for us, commemoration is not limited to a few places and days; rather, it is an ongoing process and form of exchange. We are therefore taking the 80th anniversary as an opportunity to place the liberation at the centre of our activities for 365 days and to take it beyond the memorial sites and out into Austria as a whole – as exemplified by our cooperation project Liberation, Objects!, for which we have created a network with 52 institutions throughout Austria and exchanged information about objects in their collections that relate to Mauthausen and its subcamps. The results are presented in the museums themselves, digitally and in the form of a catalogue.

With our film retrospective in Mauthausen attracting more and more visitors every year, during this Memorial Year we are once again showing feature films related to the history of National Socialism in Vienna as well. Starting in February, each month we will present one film on a Sunday afternoon in cooperation with the Austrian Film Museum. All the films deal with the question: 'What does a new beginning mean after the horrors of mass extermination?'

The light and sound installation #eachnamematters, which we have been organising together with Ars Electronica since 2021, moves to Vienna for the first time for its fifth year. Over three evenings, names will be projected onto the facade of the Hofburg, from the balcony of which Adolf Hitler announced the 'Anschluss' of Austria on 15 March 1938. Against this backdrop, the names of more than 84,000 victims of the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp system will be read out during the installation.

Supported by representatives of the victim nations, embassies, and survivor and victim associations, we are organising a joint exhibition of international commemorative symbols, which will be on display in the Memorial Park of the Mauthausen Memorial from May. Commemorative symbols related to Mauthausen and its subcamps that were erected in the countries of origin of those murdered in the concentration camp system will give visibility to the memory work done outside of Austria.

Syrian artist Judy Mardnli has been working at the Mauthausen Memorial since 2023, processing his impressions of the historical site through his paintings. The special exhibition Paths to Freedom opens in January and forms the starting point for an outreach programme that offers schoolchildren the opportunity to talk to and work with the artist.

In addition, we have also significantly expanded the range of themed tours on offer in order to shed light on as many aspects of the liberation as possible and give participants the chance to discuss them with us. Two longer commemorative walks will take place in memory of the 'Mühlviertel Hare Hunt' and the death marches to Gunskirchen.



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# LIFE! END OF DISCUSSION. END-OF-LIFE DISCUSSIONS IN THE INTENSIVE CARE SETTING

**Note: This piece first appeared in the 2018 FASPE Journal. While conversations about death with dignity and end-of-life care have continued to evolve since then, this piece remains a relevant analysis of contemporary practices as well as a helpful recommendation for how we might move forward with ethical decision-making and action in mind.**

On a cloudless day in June, I stood in front of a barrack at the Auschwitz I camp along with 30 other FASPE Fellows. This brick-red building has not been restored or reconstructed as part of the permanent exhibition of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum but instead has been preserved in its original state. Here, women and children who were the subject of “scientific” experiments by Nazi physicians were once imprisoned. The walls were dusty and slate colored. Slivers of afternoon sunlight filtered through and illuminated the emptiness of rooms once used for sterilization, freezing and other experiments by Nazi physicians, the most infamous of whom was Josef Mengele. These experiments were painful, often deadly, and performed on prisoners without their consent. In our FASPE seminar discussions, we broached the step-by-step ideological distortions that led Nazi physicians to go from early sterilization experiments and euthanasia of the elderly and disabled—those deemed a burden to society—to the large-scale extermination of Jews and others termed “racial undesirables.”<sup>1</sup>

Six weeks later, I was working a month-long rotation in a hospital intensive care unit (ICU). One of my patients was an elderly man, who had formerly been a professor of English literature at a prestigious university in India. After a fall leading to a traumatic brain injury, he suffered severe neurologic damage and a prolonged hospital stay due to respiratory failure, bowel obstruction and repeated infections. During our latest meeting with the patient’s family to discuss the goals of care, the attending physician had stated that even after trying “everything possible,” the patient had still not improved, and he therefore recommended withdrawal of interventions and the start of comfort care. Upon hearing this, the patient’s wife became emotional and began hurling a series of accusations at us, stating that we had been “experimenting on him,” that we were “not doing anything for him,” and now that we were done, we were “giving up on him.”

Back in the workroom, the wife’s accusations were easily dismissed by those at the meeting as an irrational, emotional outburst—a failure on her part to confront the reality of her husband’s situation. But the incident disturbed me. How different, I thought, was the situation of patients being cared for in the ICU from that of prisoners being experimented upon in concentration camps? Why did I find that the wife’s words made me think of how Nazi physicians had experimented on prisoners and carried out the involuntary euthanasia of those deemed “incurably sick” or labeled as having “burdensome lives”?<sup>2</sup>

At a time when the right-to-die and death-with-dignity movements are evolving, when

<sup>1</sup> Peter Fritzsche, *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009).





Block 10, Auschwitz I where medical experiments took place.

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of the Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York: Harper Collins, 1986).

atrocities is that they resulted not from a breakdown of morality or a sinister dive into evil but rather grew out of a “rational,” step-by-step ideological distortion of what it means to heal. They represented a “transmutation of values”<sup>4</sup> that enabled medicalized killing to be seen as a therapeutic cleansing of the body politic and that allowed daily, bureaucratic medical tasks to be cut off from ethical reasoning.

The label “life unworthy of life” was initially used by the Nazi government to characterize the physically disabled and mentally ill to justify their coerced sterilization and murder.<sup>5</sup> However, over time, its meaning was extended to people who were considered “racially impure,” culminating in mass killings at extermination camps.

Furthermore, central to Nazi grassroots health propaganda was one of Hitler’s maxims: “what is useful for the community has priority over what is useful for the individual” (*Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz*). This view led to a medical ethos that not only favored paternalism but also a total disregard for the human person as an individual.<sup>6</sup>

The medical experiments performed by Nazi physicians on concentration camp prisoners over the course of World War II, as well as other abuses perpetrated by the medical profession, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (in which treatment for syphilis was withheld from rural African-American men without their knowledge over a 40-year period), have left a legacy of distrust of the medical profession, especially when it comes to its treatment of the poor and other vulnerable populations.

Many aspects of the principles of modern American medical care may be viewed as correctives to 20th-century abuses in the medical profession. The historical experience of Nazi atrocities, some have argued, provides post-Holocaust physicians with an “absolute and infinite moral obligation to care for severely, chronically and non-rehabilitable sick individuals,”<sup>7</sup> giving rise to a medico-legal system that protects life sedulously. In the arenas of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and intensive care, this sedulous protection of life has come to be called “erring on the side of life,” i.e., any chance to prolong a life tips the scale towards intervention.<sup>8</sup>

In the decades following the Holocaust, medical care in the US has also evolved from a paternalistic approach to one that emphasizes the patient and their autonomy. The principle of patient autonomy is generally understood to mean that physicians allow patients to make their own decisions regarding what interventions they will or will not receive. Closely tied to patient autonomy is the principle of informed consent, where the physician shoulders responsibility for informing the patient of the nature of the intervention, risks and benefits, and reasonable alternatives but afterwards leaves the burden of final decision-making to the patient (or their surrogate decision-makers). In the mid-20th century, “erring on the side of life” became medical dogma. Patient autonomy, informed consent and the overarching theme of “patient-centered care” became fundamental, unquestioned tenets of the practice of modern medicine.

However, I argue that a dogmatic adherence to these principles is not unlike the blind obedience of Nazi physicians to the distorted ideologies of “healing” the Volk or people at

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<sup>4</sup> Lifton.

<sup>5</sup> Lifton.

<sup>6</sup> Warren Reich, *The Care-Based Ethic of Nazi Medicine and the Moral Importance of What We Care About*, “American Journal of Bioethics”, 1 (2001): 64-74.

<sup>7</sup> Alan Jotkowitz, S. Glick and B. Gesundheit, *A Case Against Justified Non-Voluntary Active Euthanasia (The Groningen Protocol)*, “American Journal of Bioethics”, 8(11) (2008): 23-26.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur Derse, *Erring on the Side of Life’ Is Sometimes an Error: Physicians Have the Primary Responsibility to Correct This*, “American Journal of Bioethics”, 17(2) (2017): 39-41.

atrocities is that they resulted not from a breakdown of morality or a sinister dive into evil but rather grew out of a “rational,” step-by-step ideological distortion of what it means to heal. They represented a “transmutation of values”<sup>4</sup> that enabled medicalized killing to be seen as a therapeutic cleansing of the body politic and that allowed daily, bureaucratic medical tasks to be cut off from ethical reasoning.

The label “life unworthy of life” was initially used by the Nazi government to characterize the physically disabled and mentally ill to justify their coerced sterilization and murder.<sup>5</sup> However, over time, its meaning was extended to people who were considered “racially impure,” culminating in mass killings at extermination camps.

Furthermore, central to Nazi grassroots health propaganda was one of Hitler’s maxims: “what is useful for the community has priority over what is useful for the individual” (Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz). This view led to a medical ethos that not only favored paternalism but also a total disregard for the human person as an individual.<sup>6</sup>

The medical experiments performed by Nazi physicians on concentration camp prisoners over the course of World War II, as well as other abuses perpetrated by the medical profession, such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (in which treatment for syphilis was withheld from rural African-American men without their knowledge over a 40-year period), have left a legacy of distrust of the medical profession, especially when it comes to its treatment of the poor and other vulnerable populations.

Many aspects of the principles of modern American medical care may be viewed as correctives to 20th-century abuses in the medical profession. The historical experience of Nazi atrocities, some have argued, provides post-Holocaust physicians with an “absolute and infinite moral obligation to care for severely, chronically and non-rehabilitable sick individuals,”<sup>7</sup> giving rise to a medico-legal system that protects life sedulously. In the arenas of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and intensive care, this sedulous protection of life has come to be called “erring on the side of life,” i.e., any chance to prolong a life tips the scale towards intervention.<sup>8</sup>

In the decades following the Holocaust, medical care in the US has also evolved from a paternalistic approach to one that emphasizes the patient and their autonomy. The principle of patient autonomy is generally understood to mean that physicians allow patients to make their own decisions regarding what interventions they will or will not receive. Closely tied to patient autonomy is the principle of informed consent, where the physician shoulders responsibility for informing the patient of the nature of the intervention, risks and benefits, and reasonable alternatives but afterwards leaves the burden of final decision-making to the patient (or their surrogate decision-makers). In the mid-20th century, “erring on the side of life” became medical dogma. Patient autonomy, informed consent and the overarching theme of “patient-centered care” became fundamental, unquestioned tenets of the practice of modern medicine.

However, I argue that a dogmatic adherence to these principles is not unlike the blind

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<sup>9</sup> Haiden Huskamp, Nancy Keating, Jennifer Malin, et al., *Discussions with Physicians About Hospice Among Patients with Metastatic Lung Cancer*, “Archives of Internal Medicine”, 169(10) (2009): 954.

<sup>10</sup> Nancy Keating et al., *Cancer Patients' Roles in Treatment Decisions: Do Characteristics of the Decision Influence Roles?*, “Journal of Clinical Oncology”, 28(28) (2010): 4364-4370.

<sup>11</sup> Sarah Harrington and Thomas Smith, *The Role of Chemotherapy at the End of Life: 'When Is Enough, Enough?'*, “The Journal of the American Medical Association”, 299(22) (2008): 2667.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Dzung, Alessandra Colaiani, Martin Roland, et al., *Moral Distress Amongst American Physician Trainees Regarding Futile Treatments at the End of Life: A Qualitative Study*, “Journal of General Internal Medicine”, 31(1) (2015): 93-99.

<sup>13</sup> *End-of-Life Care: A Challenge in Terms of Costs and Quality*, “KHN Morning Briefing”, June 4, 2013.



the NEJM who died from esophageal cancer, described what he sought from his own physicians at the end of his life that may help us to begin to approach these issues. He wrote, “a physician who merely spreads an array of vendibles in front of the patient and then says, ‘Go ahead and choose, it’s your life,’ [...] does not warrant the somewhat tarnished but still distinguished title of doctor.”<sup>15</sup> Thus, we as physicians should challenge ourselves to recognize that patient autonomy is not synonymous with endless choice, and, moreover, shifting the burden of decision-making from us to our patients or their families is not patient-centered care. Especially when it pertains to end-of-life care, the data suggests that some patients prefer a more physician-driven decision-making process.<sup>16</sup> A meaningful inroad towards becoming better physicians for patients at the end of life may start with actively eliciting the preferences of patients about whether they wish to receive recommendations concerning life support. This is not an abnegation of responsibility but rather an approach that is likely to engender trust.

Moreover, while prolonging life is clearly one of the main goals of medicine, I argue that doing so should not be the sine qua non of what it means to care for a patient. The path of least resistance may be to follow the hemodynamic parameters and serological markers as surrogates for preserving life for patients who are intubated, on a ventilator and being fed through a gastrostomy tube in the ICU, but more fundamental to the idea of recognizing and protecting the sanctity of life is the need to understand a patient’s specific perspective on what gives his or her life meaning in a setting replete with depersonalizing devices. Rather than responding to the Nazi legacy of “life unworthy of life” with “life for the sake of life,” we should always attempt to recognize the intrinsic, unconditional quality of human life and to consider each patient’s goals and values when we offer our interventions. And we should understand the choice to die with dignity over living too long a life deprived of meaning.

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<sup>14</sup> Daniela Lamas and Lisa Rosenbaum, *Freedom from the Tyranny of Choice — Teaching the End-of-Life Conversation*, “New England Journal of Medicine”, 366(18) (2012): 1655-1657.

<sup>15</sup> Franz Ingelfinger, *Arrogance*, “New England Journal of Medicine”, 303(26) (1980): 1507-1511.



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<sup>16</sup> Daren Heyland, Joan Tranmer, C.J. O’Callaghan and Amiram Gafni, *The Seriously Ill Hospitalized Patient: Preferred Role in End-of-Life Decision Making?*, “Journal of Critical Care”, 18(1) (2003): 3-10.



Block 10, Auschwitz I where medical experiments took place.

thing as life not worthy to be lived. This attitude in its early stages concerned itself merely with the severely and chronically sick. Gradually, the sphere of those to be included in this category was enlarged to encompass the socially unproductive, the ideologically unwanted, the racially unwanted and finally all non-Germans. But it is important to realize that the infinitely small wedged-in lever from which this entire trend of mind received its impetus was the attitude toward the non-rehabilitable sick.<sup>18</sup>

Alexander is a cogent proponent of the slippery slope argument, but his explanation should challenge those of us who live in the world after Nuremberg not to throw out the slope altogether in fear of our sliding

uncontrollably down but rather to remember the relative ease with which commitments to "care" and to "heal" were betrayed due to a failure on the part of medical professionals to recognize and act upon their own moral agency. As one German nurse wrote, "I sensed that the killings were wrong [...] I carried out the deeds as prescribed, because I viewed it as my duty, inasmuch as my superior told me to."<sup>19</sup> The small, incremental steps towards the commitment of atrocities, taken unwaveringly in the name of "duty" to their profession, are among the biggest reminders to me of the dangers of dogmatic, unreflective adherence to the guidelines and protocols that underpin the modern medical profession. Even principles as wholesome and routinely unquestioned as patient autonomy, informed consent, and patient-centered care can become harmful if we stop evaluating whether our actions in service to these principles

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<sup>17</sup> Leah Rosenberg and David Doolittle, *Learn and Live?: Understanding the Cultural Focus on Nonbeneficial Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) as a Response to Existential Distress About Death and Dying*, "American Journal of Bioethics", 17(2) (2017): 54-55.

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One of the key personal responsibilities impressed upon me as a new physician is the development of powers of discernment and judgment regarding aligning my actions and



Block 10, Auschwitz I where medical experiments took place.

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<sup>18</sup> Leo Alexander, *Medical Science Under Dictatorship*, “New England Journal of Medicine”, 241 (1949): 39–47.

<sup>19</sup> Derse, “Erring on the Side of Life.”

<sup>20</sup> Daniela Lamas, Robert Owens, Rachelle Bernacki, et al., *Palliative Care: A Core Competency for Intensive Care Unit Doctors*, “American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine”, 189(12) (2014): 1569-1569.

<sup>21</sup> Justin Sanders, *Finding the Right Words at the Right Time — High-Value Advance Care Planning*, “New England Journal of Medicine”, 372(7) (2015): 598-599.

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# THE INAUGURATION OF THE EHRI POLISH NATIONAL NODE

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During a ceremony at the Jewish Historical Institute and the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure – European Research Infrastructure Consortium (EHRI-ERIC) was inaugurated on January 26, 2025. The date of the inauguration of the EHRI-PL structure is not coincidental – the following day, January 27, was the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp.

EHRI-ERIC is the first international organization bringing together key European institutions involved in Holocaust documentation and research. The Polish coordinator of this structure is the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, which, together with the Polish Center for Holocaust Research at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences and the Philip Friedman Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Łódź, has created a national structure within EHRI-ERIC. The Polish EHRI node (EHRI-PL) will be supervised by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

The newly established consortium's goals include providing wide international access to archival sources on the Holocaust, establishing and strengthening cooperation among researchers and scholars of this subject from Poland and abroad, delineating new research directions and methodological approaches, and supporting researchers working on the topic of the Holocaust.

'Holocaust research is conducted all over the world. The exchange of views and opinions between researchers from different centers is crucial for the development of this sub-discipline of Jewish studies. It is also important because of the dispersion of sources. Materials concerning the Holocaust – whether original documents or elicited sources (such as video testimonies) were collected in Europe, the Americas and Australia. Only an attempt to reach as many important archival collections as possible will allow us to describe the stories from the war period,' says the director of the Jewish Historical Institute, Dr Michał Trębacz.

The inauguration of the Polish EHRI-PL node began at the Jewish Historical Institute, where several dozens of representatives of academic institutions, museums, ministries and diplomats from European countries, Israel and the United States, as well as representatives of the European Commission and the European Parliament, met.

Our guests visited the permanent and temporary exhibition of the Jewish Historical Institute, guided by Dr Justyna Majewska and Dr Zofia Trębacz from the Research Department. They also had the opportunity to see original documents from the Ringelblum Archive, normally hidden in the Jewish Historical Institute's vault. The presentation was accompanied by a fascinating story by Agnieszka Reszka and Aleksandra Szarapanowska from the JHI Archive.

The main ceremony inaugurating EHRI-ERIC took place at the Museum of the History of Polish Jews POLIN. The importance of the event was emphasized by the presence of Hanna Wróblewska, Minister of Culture and National Heritage, and Władysław Teofil Bartoszewski, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Netherlands – host of EHRI-ERIC – was represented by Eppo Bruin, Minister of Education, Culture and Science. Those gathered also had the opportunity to listen to the incredibly moving words of Krystyna Budnicka, Holocaust



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# CALL FOR PAPERS | TRAINS OF DEATH – RAILWAY TRANSPORTS TO THE GERMAN DEATH CAMPS. STATE OF KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH POSTULATES

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We invite historians, researchers, regionalists, and students, for our academic conference – “Trains of Death – Railway Transports to the German Death Camps. State of Knowledge and Research Postulates – that is going to take place at the Museum in Memorial in Sobibór on 8-10 September.

From the very beginning of World War II, it were the German railways (Reichsbahn and Ostbahn) that – together with the railway companies in the Third Reich’s allied states – served as the primary tool in organising deportations and displacements. Several million Jews from all over Europe were deported to extermination and concentration camps by trains in the years 1942-1944. Railway transport was fundamental for the mechanisms and pace of the extermination of Jews. The awareness about this subject in Poland, however, remains insufficient despite the passage of time.

The aim of this conference held by the State Museum at Majdanek is to broaden the knowledge about the logistical aspect of deportations. The range of topics includes:

- The utilisation of railway during the deportations of Jews from the General Government and the Polish areas incorporated into the Third Reich; transports to the extermination camps in Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Chełmno on the river Ner (Kulmhof), and Auschwitz-Birkenau
- The organisation of deportations of Jews from the Third Reich and occupied states The demeanours of railway personnel members – employed both in the central offices and locally (including the railwaymen working at stations adjacent to extermination camps)
- The utilisation of railway and its infrastructure in the plunder of the victims’ property
- The reconnaissance of the resistance in the field of transports’ courses
- The presentation of any sources relevant to the discussed subject: documents, post-war trials and investigations, iconography, etc.

The conference is addressed to scholars working within the research scope of broadly understood role of railway during World War II. Please send abstracts (max. 1,000 characters including spaces) together with your biographical notes to: [konferencja@majdanek.eu](mailto:konferencja@majdanek.eu)

Final registration deadline: 15 March 2025.

Conference venue: Museum and Memorial in Sobibór.

Conference language: Polish and English (live booth translation).



These items were found in the same location as the other artifacts, suggesting they were part of the same site or activity.

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# ŁUCJA KOCH AND KIMBERLY COOMBS NAMED THE LAUREATE OF THE 2024 ROBERT I. GOLDMAN AWARD

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) presented the Robert I. Goldman Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education to the School District of Palm Beach County's K-12 Holocaust Studies Program Planner Kimberly Coombs and POLIN's Deputy Director of Education Łucja Koch. The awards were given at the foundation's recent gathering for Holocaust Rescuers in Warsaw, Poland, just after the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The JFR selected both educators as recipients of the 2024 Goldman Award because of their outstanding commitment to Holocaust education, Coombs for her empowering educators across the school district to better teach the Holocaust in their schools, and Koch for her devotion to ensuring the Holocaust is taught in Poland by providing educators with Holocaust teacher training programs through POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews. "We are privileged to honor exceptional educators each year and especially proud to present this year's award to Kimberly for her outstanding work in ensuring the highest possible levels of Holocaust education across her district in Palm Beach and to Łucja for her efforts to ensuring that Polish students understand what occurred during the Nazi occupation here," said JFR Executive Vice President Stanlee Stahl.

"It is an incredible honor to be chosen as the 2024 Goldman Award recipient by the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, one of the world's leading institutions in Holocaust education," said Koch. "It is especially humbling to receive this award in the presence of our

**ROBERT I. GOLDMAN  
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE**  
*In Holocaust Education*

The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous is proud to bestow this award to Łucja Koch in recognition of her efforts to ensure that Polish students understand what occurred during the Nazi occupation there.

**ŁUCJA KOCH**

THE JEWISH FOUNDATION  
*for the righteous*



## ROBERT I. GOLDMAN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

*In Holocaust Education*

THE JEWISH FOUNDATION  
*for the righteous*

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"Receiving this award this year was especially meaningful because it was given one day after we participated in the international ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, just outside of the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau, and was presented at the JFR's gathering in Warsaw honoring 10 of the remaining righteous heroes who in history's darkest hour, stood as a beacon of hope. The righteous are not just heroes but role models for our students across Palm Beach County, and meeting some of them in person was awe-inspiring. In an era when antisemitism, misinformation, and disinformation are on the rise, it's more important than ever that every student who leaves the classroom fully understands the history of the Holocaust," said Coombs.

Coombs' continued involvement in JFR programming has been made possible by inSIGHT Through Education, which provides Palm Beach County Schools with the resources to educate its students about the Holocaust and supports Palm Beach County educators' participation in the

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# 'YAD VASHEM WAY' INAUGURATED TODAY IN NEW YORK CITY

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As the world observed International Holocaust Remembrance Day and marked the 80th anniversary of Auschwitz-Birkenau's liberation this week, Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, took part in a series of historic events in New York City.

In New York City—home to one of the largest Holocaust survivor communities outside Israel—the inauguration of 'Yad Vashem Way' carries profound significance, arriving at a time when antisemitic incidents in the city have reached historic highs amid a troubling global surge in antisemitism. The street co-naming initiative, honoring the world-renowned Holocaust Remembrance Center, was sponsored by New York City Council Member Keith Powers and supported by Mayor of New York City Eric Adams.

"The alarming resurgence of antisemitism reminds us of the urgency of our mission," said Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan. "By commemorating the Holocaust and educating future generations, we strengthen our collective resolve to build a world of tolerance, mutual respect, and peace."

The newly inaugurated Yad Vashem Street was the focus of several featured events this past week in New York City.

## NYC Council Special Event Recognizing Yad Vashem's Mission

On 29 January 2025, Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan, together with City Council Speaker Adrienne E. Adams, Jewish Caucus Chair NYC Council Member Eric Dinowitz, NYC Council Members Keith Powers, Julie Menin, Lynn Schulman, Lincoln Restler, and Inna Vernikov hosted a special event in the New York City Council, commemorating the 80 years since the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and attesting to Yad Vashem's invaluable role in preserving Holocaust memory, fostering education, and fighting antisemitism.

Yad Vashem Chairman Dayan delivered the keynote address from the floor of the New York City Council where he emphasized,

"As we confront the global resurgence of antisemitism, this event and its decision to recognize Yad Vashem's impact reaffirms New York City's commitment to ensuring that the Holocaust's lessons remain a guiding light for humanity. Together, we must stand against hatred and ignorance."

## Inauguration of Yad Vashem Way

On 30 January 2025, Consul General of Israel in New York Ofir Akunis, Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan, and NYC Councilmembers Keith Powers and Julie Menin gathered to unveil 'Yad Vashem Way' at East 67th Street and 3rd Avenue on Manhattan's Upper East Side. New York State Senator Liz Krueger, Congressman Jerry Nadler, Assembly Member Alex Bores, and



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### About Yad Vashem

Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, serves as the global epicenter of Holocaust commemoration, education, and documentation. Through its groundbreaking exhibitions, educational initiatives, and digital resources, Yad Vashem ensures that the memory of the Holocaust continues to inspire and educate future generations.



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