



# **Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at Authentic Memorial Sites**

**CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

**edited by  
Piotr Trojański**

# **Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at Authentic Memorial Sites**

**CURRENT STATUS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS**

**edited by  
Piotr Trojański**



**AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU STATE MUSEUM  
OŚWIĘCIM 2019**

Review:

Professor Jacek Chrobaczyński, Ph. D.

Co-ordination: Katarzyna Odrzywołek

Language review of the English version: Imogen Dalziel

Translation of texts from German and English: Kinga Żelazko and Junique

Translation Agency

Setting and e-pub: Studio Grafpa

Cover design: Studio Grafpa

ISBN 9788377042847

© Copyright by Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum & the Authors

The publication was created as part of a project implemented by the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, entitled 'The Future of Auschwitz and Holocaust Education in Authentic Memorial Sites', which was financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	6
---------------------------	---

## Part 1: Challenges

BARTOSZ BARTYZEL

<i>Educational Challenges at the Authentic Auschwitz Memorial Site</i> .....	11
--	----

PIOTR TARNOWSKI

<i>Educational Challenges at the Stutthof Museum and Memorial Site from the Perspective of a Museum Pedagogue</i> .....	19
---	----

MAŁGORZATA GRZANKA

<i>Education at the Museum of the Former German Extermination Camp Kulmhof in Chełmno-on-the-Ner</i> .....	25
--	----

JOANNA PODOLSKA

<i>What do the Stones Tell Us? Education and Memory of the Place: The Example of the Bałuty District and the Łódź Ghetto in the Activity of the Dialogue Centre</i> .....	39
---	----

## Part 2: Prospects

MAREK KUCIA AND KATARZYNA STEC

<i>Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust from the Perspective of Social Research</i> .....	60
--	----

ALICJA BARTUŚ

<i>On How to React to Evil: A Visit to Auschwitz and Attitude Shaping</i> ...	92
---	----

AGNIESZKA KASPEREK

*Memorial Sites and their Role in Polish Language Teaching  
with Reference to the Shoah* ..... 110

### Part 3: Good Practices

ADAM MUSIAŁ

*An Online Lesson Preparing for a Visit to the Auschwitz Memorial:  
The Authors' Reflections and Remarks* ..... 128

GABRIEL DITTRICH

*“Education with a View to the Future”: The Campus Christophorus  
Jugendwerk Project* ..... 136

TOMASZ MICHALIK

*People with DisABILITIES at the Museum: From Cognitive  
and Ethical Challenges to Hope for a New Version of History* ..... 152

MARCIN OWSIŃSKI

*Implementation of Inclusive Pedagogy Assumptions  
at the Stutthof Museum* ..... 167

EWA GUZIAK

*History through Art: Historical Education of Teenagers with  
Disabilities at the Memorial Site through Polish-German Seminars* ..... 180

PIOTR KONDRATOWICZ

*Emotions in the World of Silence: The Deaf at the Authentic  
Memorial Site – Auschwitz, where Silence may Mean More than  
a Thousand Words...* ..... 201

**Bibliography (selection)** ..... 207

# Introduction

What is education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust? Are there any specific features that distinguish it from education about the Second World War? How should it be implemented in an authentic memorial site? Do historical sites, such as the areas of the former concentration and extermination camps, have any influence on its form? If so, what consequences and challenges do they pose to educational work? What should be done to increase access to memorial sites for young people with special educational needs? How can we prepare them for a visit to an authentic memorial site using new technologies, especially the Internet?

These, and many more questions, inspired the authors of the chapters included in this publication. They were also the subject of discussion during an international conference held in Oświęcim from 10–12 October 2018. The conference summarised a Polish-Dutch educational project entitled ‘The Future of Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in an Authentic Memorial Site’, which was implemented between 2015–2019 by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim and the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Its origin was connected with the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the KL Auschwitz camp, which was attended by King William Alexander of the Netherlands. After his visit to the Auschwitz Memorial Site, the King expressed his wish to support the Museum in its mission. Therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands asked the Museum to prepare proposals for

activities that could be financed by the Dutch government. Following the decision of the Auschwitz Museum's management, these activities assumed an educational character, and so the development of these ideas was assigned to a team at the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

The idea of involving the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam – which has been working with the Auschwitz Museum for years – in the project was born from the outset of the conceptual work. Following mutual consultations, it became apparent that both institutions face similar problems and challenges in education at an authentic memorial site. Furthermore, they both ask similar questions concerning, amongst others, the possibility and legitimacy of combining history with the present; the issues of preserving the authenticity of the memorial site; and challenges related to the specificity of different groups of recipients. These types of questions that inspired the development of 'The Future of Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in an Authentic Memorial Site'.

Therefore, the main objective of the project has evolved into the exchange of experiences within the scope of present-day challenges, and an attempt to find answers to the following questions: How can we connect the history of Auschwitz and the Holocaust with current human rights issues? How do we manage different groups of visitors? How can innovative teaching methods be used to reach a broad range of target groups?

The project's aims were implemented through five components: exchange of experiences between teachers, educators, and guides during study visits to Poland and the Netherlands; development of new educational materials, especially e-lessons; adaptation of Memorial Site visits to the needs of people with special educational needs; and training for a group of young leaders to actively support the educational activities of the Auschwitz Museum in their community.

The accomplishments of the project were presented during the aforementioned conference, which was attended by representatives of

various memorial sites from Poland and abroad, as well as by directors and museum workers. It is worth mentioning that a special group of conference participants were teachers and museum educators, who participated in meetings in Poland and Holland as part of the project. Participants in the conference also included a group of young leaders who met during the project and exchanged ideas on how to combine knowledge about Auschwitz and the Holocaust with today's problems. Two educational travelling exhibitions helped them to accomplish this task: 'Anne Frank – A Story for Today' and 'I'm from Here: Poland of Many Nations'. The subject matter of these exhibitions became an inspiration for young people to discuss human rights and education for promoting tolerance.

This book is the outcome of this project, particularly the follow-up conference. It is divided into three parts: 'Challenges', 'Prospects' and 'Good Practices'.

The first part is introductory and contains four articles by museum workers representing various authentic memorial sites, including two former death camps, one concentration camp and the area of a former ghetto. In writing about the specificity of these places, Bartosz Bartyzel and Piotr Tarnowski reflect on the challenges of education in the authentic Auschwitz and Stutthof Memorials respectively. Małgorzata Grzanka discusses the objectives, forms of activity and challenges of education at the Kulmhof Memorial Site. Finally, Joanna Podolska presents the issue of the impact of the former ghetto memorial site on the activity of the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź.

The second part of the book presents various research perspectives on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, namely social, ethical and Polish studies. The collection of three texts on this subject begins with an article by Marek Kucia and Katarzyna Stec, in which the authors conduct a synthetic review of the state of research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in Poland while presenting many interesting reflections and conclusions for the future. In the second article, Alicja Bartuś explores the impact of education conducted at the Auschwitz Memorial

Site on shaping young people's attitudes, especially on its potential to encourage them to be proactive and react to surrounding evil. Agnieszka Kasperek, on the other hand, shares the results of her research on the importance and role of authentic memorial sites in Polish education.

The book ends with a chapter presenting examples of good practices, which shows various educational projects carried out at the authentic Auschwitz Memorial Site. The connecting elements of these projects are activities aimed at increasing the accessibility of the memorial site for various groups of visitors, mainly disabled people. The project description begins with an article by Adam Musiał, in which the author expresses his reflections and comments on the online lesson preceding the visit to the Auschwitz Memorial Site. The second text by Gabriel Ditrlich presents a project carried out at the Auschwitz Museum by the Christophorus Jugendwerk Campus in Germany, titled 'Teaching for the Future', designed for young Germans from socially neglected communities. Next, an article by Tomasz Michalik touches on the extremely important topic of cognitive and ethical challenges related to the education of people with special needs at an authentic memorial site. It is a kind of theoretical introduction to the presentation of three consecutive projects aimed at disabled youth, which were conducted at a memorial site. The first, by Marcin Owsiański, presents the ways of implementing educational assumptions, encompassing the Stutthof Museum. Ewa Guziak describes Polish-German art seminars, during which participants learn about the history of the Auschwitz Memorial through art. These are complemented by an extremely personal and emotional text by Piotr Kondratowicz, which presents a project of visits by the deaf to the authentic Auschwitz Memorial Site.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere hope that this book, which is to some extent a kind of documentation of the Polish-Dutch project, will become a source of inspiration for a debate on the future of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in authentic memorial sites.

**Piotr Trojański**

**PART 1:**

**Challenges**

BARTOSZ BARTYZEL

## Educational Challenges at the Authentic Auschwitz Memorial Site

*Our shared duty – both that of Survivors as well as national leaders – is to ingrain in the current and future generations the knowledge of what happens when we let strong prejudice and hatred flourish. At homes and in schools, we need to teach our children tolerance and understanding. Tolerance is not obvious. It has to be taught. And we need to explain that hatred is never justified and love is never bad.*

*Roman Kent, former Auschwitz prisoner<sup>1</sup>*

The world is undergoing constant changes. The history that we tell and teach at Memorial Sites is fading away. The last witnesses of these tragic events are passing away. At the same time, new generations of visitors are attending museums located within authentic historical spaces. These generations are educated and shaped in a modern and dynamically changing world. How can we share this history with them? How do we reach them? And finally, should the experience of passing through and learning about the authentic Memorial Site remain a history lesson, or should it perhaps be something more?

---

<sup>1</sup> 70 rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz, Oświęcim, 2015, p. 80.

### **The Memorial Site - just a history lesson?**

It is natural and obvious that while visiting the Auschwitz Memorial Site one learns the history of this former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp. The reasons and context behind its establishment are discussed; the subsequent stages of its development are shown and the tragic incarceration conditions are presented, together with the subject of the Shoah; and finally, the liberation of prisoners and punishments for perpetrators is explained. These stories consist not only of facts and figures and descriptions of places, but most importantly, of specific stories of human tragedy. This is a history lesson. It is in its essence a document of that era – both tangible as well as intangible. An authentic document of the time and place.

Nowadays, when the last witnesses of those events are passing away, we should very thoroughly consider, analyse and discuss the causes and foundations of those tragic events. Are we able to protect ourselves against such tragedies in the future? Causes, consequences and protective mechanisms function, in fact, just like communicating vessels. It is hard to reflect on one of these elements and ignore others. Education at the Memorial Site is naturally concentrated on effects, on what happened. In the standardised narration, however, we cannot forget about the causes. A visit to the Memorial Site should not only teach, but also encourage and motivate visitors to think about the third element – prevention.

The last witnesses of those events who are still among us talk about it so frequently. This constitutes a specific warning and message that they wish to leave us. Their direct experience forms unique, authentic and reliable ‘evidence’. Their experiences also remain historical resources. *“I came back here in order to take part in the commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of KL Auschwitz, for the first time after leaving the camp. Since then, I have come back to this place more often. These are the anniversaries of liberation. I have here the occasion to meet the people with whom I shared my fate. As a witness of history, I share my experience with young people from Poland and Germany, hoping that in the future, they will not have to experience what my generation was forced to live through,”* said

Halina Brzozowska-Zduńczyk, during the events commemorating the 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary of liberation.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, a year later, on 27 January 2017, another former female prisoner emphasized: *“Now I live, I have lived to be here 72 years after. I have to say that it is a great feeling of happiness, because life is the most beautiful gift that one can get. Has Auschwitz influenced my life? Yes, it has. It had an impact on the job that I chose. I believe that education is the key which opens all doors. We should educate children to become adults who can tell the good and the bad apart.”*<sup>3</sup>

Even though they are relating their own tragic camp experiences, former prisoners often share visible warnings and references to the modern world in what they say. *“I was there, it was so terrible! Incarcerated for two years, an alien to myself in this sudden incarnation of Hell, an illegal in Auschwitz – a Jewish child, to be sent to the gas chamber immediately! [...] These memories do not let me accept the thought that people all over the world – as I’m constantly hearing with genuine pain from many people – do not know, are unable to comprehend what Auschwitz consisted of, what it means to a person when their life, and the lives of their loved ones, their people, are threatened by violence and punished by all means in the name of a cruel theory, hatred towards others, lust for power over other people, and the confiscation of their property. Escaping these memories, reluctance to talk about them, the fear of reminding the world about them, outrageous Holocaust denial – it all makes me feel disgusted, it scares me, because I know the Hell that can be born and – when not opposed – develop,”* Halina Birenbaum warned.<sup>4</sup> During the last commemoration of the anniversary, on 27 January 2019, Leon Weintraub also said in turn, *“I feel a great pain and regret very much that in many European countries, including our own [Poland], there are now people marching in uniforms*

<sup>2</sup> PS [Paweł Sawicki], “Podróż życia jeszcze się nie skończyła”. 71. rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz, <http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/aktualnosci/podroz-zycia-jeszcze-sie-nie-skonczyla-71-rocznica-wyzwolenia-auschwitz,1780.html> [accessed: 10.05.2019].

<sup>3</sup> PS [Paweł Sawicki], “Czas”. 72. rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz, <http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/aktualnosci/czas-72-rocznica-wyzwolenia-auschwitz-,1876.html> [accessed: 10.05.2019].

<sup>4</sup> 70 rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz, p. 61.

*similar to Nazi ones. They openly call themselves Nazis and identify with this ideology, promoting its slogans. This ideology, which under the symbol of a broken cross, murdered those that they treated as “sub-humans”. Nowadays, admitting to being a Nazi is undoubtedly defining oneself as a murderer and author of genocide, as this is inevitably the final outcome of such an attitude, which from the beginning is aimed at preaching hostility and hostility towards others, which considers racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia as advantages, just as the Nazis did. And it is all happening in our country, which experienced so much damage and suffered so greatly during the Nazi occupation.”<sup>5</sup>*

During commemorative events devoted to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of liberation of the camp, Piotr M. A. Cywiński, Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, said that, *“Today, Auschwitz constitutes an enormous warning and a great commitment for us all; nowadays, post-war generations need to carry the burden of this memory and understand the decisive factor of their own responsibility in the future of our world.”<sup>6</sup>* So has the world become better after Auschwitz? Have we understood anything, have we learnt anything? “Never again!”, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it”, “It happened, therefore it can happen again” – these are the slogans which often appear in the context of learning this history. After Auschwitz, wars have still broken out. After Auschwitz, the world is not free from genocide. Different camps are still established, human rights are not respected. Looking helplessly – from the perspective of a Memorial Site – at the evil of the world, we often ask ourselves the question: is the lesson from Auschwitz only a history lesson? Surely it is also a lesson of humanity, human rights, sensitivity and responsibility. A lesson which shows what ideologies and extreme beliefs lead to, together with hatred, intolerance,

---

<sup>5</sup> “Słowa nienawiści zatruwają wyobraźnię i otepiają sumienia. 74 rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz”, <http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/aktualnosci/slowa-nienawisci-zatruwaja-wyobraznie-i-otepiaja-sumienia-74-rocznica-wyzwolenia-auschwitz.2036.html> [accessed: 10.05.2019].

<sup>6</sup> *70 rocznica wyzwolenia Auschwitz*, p. 5.

segregation and racial prejudice. Finally, it must also clearly present what war leads to.

*“I come here, I have to come here in order to be the witness of truth, to tell people about this tragic history, tell them about what happened here. And it is not only me, there are more of us coming here. These moments are difficult for us,”* emphasizes Bogdan Bartnikowski, brought to the camp as a child directly from Warsaw during the Uprising.<sup>7</sup> The role of education in authentic memorial sites indeed consists, in particular, of describing specific stories and tragedies which happened in these places. Nevertheless, we should also be describing their root causes, or at least drawing attention to them, in order for visitors to reflect on the mechanisms which led to these events. We should encourage ourselves to ask ourselves questions: what types of prevention can we find against such atrocities occurring in the future?

From the perspective of the Auschwitz Memorial Site, looking at the wars, genocides and human rights violations that have happened since 1945, there is a feeling of despair. Because it is happening again. We are educating all the time, and it is happening again. It evokes a sense of failure and disappointment. We have to be aware, however, of the fact that we are just one piece of a specific puzzle, a complicated educative and educational process. We should remember – and this should be strongly emphasised – that Memorial Sites are not isolated; they are not a lonely island within the entire process of education and teaching. They may only constitute some sort of complementary support for educational and teaching activities within families, schools, universities or civil society.

We are unable to conduct educational activity on our own, as in this way it is impossible to act effectively. We should instead treat ourselves as experts, a collective voice of conscience coming from Memorial Sites. We should make these huge numbers of people visiting all places of this kind sensitive to these issues, and co-operate with other organizations and institutions to lengthen this shared chain of education.

---

<sup>7</sup> Sawicki, “Czas”.

It would be naïve to claim that Memorial Sites as institutions are able to change the world for the better. However, they have the power to make the message coming from these Sites, the unique heritage of their tragedy, reach this world loudly and visibly. We can expect that the voice from Memorial Sites, reinforced by other organizations and institutions, will in some way be able to influence change in the world. This is how we need to perceive it, in order for our work to be meaningful and not just an empty history lesson.

### **Why do visitors come today and what do they expect?**

The last dozen years have been marked with a huge, almost five-fold increase in the number of Auschwitz Museum and Memorial Site visitors. The question of who and why is coming to this authentic memorial site is often asked.

In the past, it used to be said that people organise pilgrimages to this place. Yes, a lot of them are indeed pilgrims. They want to pray here, talk to their God. But among them there are also those who do not believe in God. Auschwitz is not only a symbol of faith or returning to faith, but also of abandoning God and faith. Additionally, among those who are coming to the Auschwitz Memorial are visitors personally connected with this place, sharing their personal and family histories: one of their relatives, ancestors or a member of their family was incarcerated in the camp or perished there. Another big group of visitors coming each year are those visiting within the framework of different educational projects. They expect more in-depth education; they are ready to spend more time here. Recently, an increase in the number of such groups has been clearly visible. Educational and commemorative activities are very much concentrated on these groups of visitors.

Nevertheless, we need to be aware of the fact – and we should remember – that the vast majority of visitors are tourists: those who arrive at the Auschwitz Memorial Site because this is a famous place on the world's touristic map. Auschwitz is a name which has become a universal symbol. These people, while travelling around the world, come to visit

this place. Their knowledge of history differs a lot, and it is often very limited. We need to respect the fact that often they do not have much time to stay at the Memorial Site and their expectations differ radically from those of educational groups. This forms a unique challenge. How do we reach them? How detailed should knowledge shared with them be? And how should we present this place in a way that ensures its unique character is not lost and it isn't made into just another "tourist attraction"? This notion is often quoted by the travel industry, which is at great odds with the custodians of the Memorial Site, whose main task is to cultivate the memory.

Personal experiences of visitors also differs from experiences they shared several or a dozen years ago. People used to arrive at the Auschwitz Memorial Site already knowing stories connected with the Second World War, based on what their families had gone through. They were emotionally connected with them through personal and direct stories of their family's lives. Their elderly relatives were the witnesses of those times; they remembered the war. Nowadays, the young generation is practically deprived of such opportunities of direct contact with the witnesses of those events, as they are either no longer with us or their age is very advanced.

We are at risk of a situation in which the history about which we educate at authentic memorial sites will soon be limited to the pages of history books and will be discussed in just a few minutes during a history lesson at school. The history of the Second World War and history of the Holocaust, topics which are so important for the authenticity of memorial sites, which form part of our identity and the consciousness of future generations, will form a notion as distant as Antiquity or the Middle Ages. It will no longer be our close personal history, but the more distant history of our family, which over the course of time may unfortunately become "prehistory".

Here, we return to the challenge that all of us must face in order to make education at memorial sites marked with human tragedy something deeper than just a history lesson: something more than just a collection of dates, numbers or facts. This is, of course, the base, our starting

point. We need to teach, but at the same time remind, commemorate and thus also warn.

In his speech during the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation, former Auschwitz prisoner Roman Kent stressed that we should teach our children tolerance and understanding. These words are obvious and important, but uttered in this specific place and context – the context of the anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz – they show the direction that education at authentic memorial sites should follow, in order for Primo Levi's warning: *"It happened, therefore it can happen again... It can happen anywhere,"* not to constitute an ominous prophecy for current and future generations.

PIOTR TARNOWSKI

## Educational Challenges at the Stutthof Museum and Memorial Site from the Perspective of a Museum Pedagogue

The scope of post-war interference in the historical “substance” of the former Stutthof concentration camp results in the fact that many visitors lose an appropriate perspective on their visit. It is linked with the absence of material graves on site. Today’s Sztutowo – a seaside resort – adds to this dissonance. The task of remembrance education delivered at the Stutthof Museum should thus primarily fulfil the objectives of organising knowledge, emotions and what determines perception in all aspects of its activity, alongside its most important tool: using the preserved potential of authenticity. We base such an attitude on three pillars: humans, memory and authenticity, having ethics as their common denominator. It is necessary to emphasise that a human is always placed at the top due to the importance of their testimony. This is the source of our belief that a conscious visit to a memorial site results from noticing the effect on human beings among the preserved post-camp facilities and objects.

The above makes it crucial for the Stutthof Museum to preserve material evidence shaping the history of this place, and then collecting and preparing scientific analysis, as well as disseminating materials concerning the history of the Stutthof camp and its branches. We adopt a broader perspective here by referring our message to the entire region where the camp was located as an area of major significance for long-term political and economic plans of the then German Reich. In order to achieve this, co-operation with former prisoners is necessary and, due to the fact that

this generation is unavoidably passing away, more and more frequently with their families. It is also important to maintain regular contact with other martyrological museums and facilities of a similar character in Poland and abroad. In general, all our activities are conducted using methods characteristic for museums – exhibitions, educational classes, conferences, publications and cultural events. Using these methods for conducting historical education, we intend to influence the attitudes of the addressees of the content we present – we teach not only history, but also, or maybe even most importantly, sensitivity, tolerance and respect towards differing opinions, as the premises of the Stutthof Museum open visitors are primarily a place of homage and remembrance devoted to those who suffered and perished here.

Polish martyrological museums have, in the last decade, undergone a transformation, in particular becoming educational spaces for younger generations. The range of subjects offered for classes conducted within the site has been significantly developed, as they do not refer exclusively to the history of a given camp. Thanks to the consistent development of co-operation with teachers and teacher training Centres, teachers' perspectives of an image of relatively one-sided and monotonous former camps, together with an unwillingness to organise visits for the young, has changed. The last several years have also demonstrated a particular utility of memorial sites as institutions acting as intermediaries in organising international youth meetings, and following these, their impact on sharing and popularising universal educational values amongst young Europeans.

At the Stutthof Museum, we consequently claim that our activities should constitute an element of promoting the development of school and extracurricular education in modern history, as well as forming an expert Centre in the field for teachers and teacher training Centres.

So far, we have been basing the pedagogical activities of the Stutthof Museum on our Educational Offer ('Oferta edukacyjna'), developed and published in 2008, which has been complemented in subsequent years with new suggestions resulting from subsequent experiences as well as

visitors' expectations.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, we were conducting activities aimed at its promotion. After 10 years, we had prepared a completely modified offer. Even if it constitutes a collection of experiences from previous years, it is totally new as educational material and results from critical analyses of classes so far offered by our team. Copying the methods and content presented in class, together with limited use of the potential of an authentic memorial site, were the main reasons for adopting modifications in the field of extracurricular historical education organised by our institution.

From the very beginning, it has been of major importance for our team to introduce scheme topics connected with the history of the Stutthof camp, as well as the war and occupation in the Pomerania region, into universal education. The project 'Pomorska Teka Edukacyjna' (*Pomeranian Educational Portfolio*), created in co-operation with Fundacja Centrum Solidarności (*Solidarity Centre Foundation*), constitutes our basic tool used for this purpose. It consists of an interactive website with a wide range of options using different means for sharing this historical message.<sup>9</sup> Our intention is to share material resources of cultural heritage with the largest possible audience, arranged according to their topics on the website.

The above summarises the evaluation of a 2012 publication entitled *Pamiętamy, pamiętam... Pomorze Gdańskie i obóz Stutthof 1939–1945. Materiały edukacyjne* (*We remember, I remember... Gdańsk Pomerania and the Stutthof Camp 1939–1945. Educational Materials*) which formed a package of educational materials supporting the development of knowledge and interest in modern history.<sup>10</sup> The suggested lesson plans were adapted to official curricula from that time.

The authenticity, to which we refer rightly and willingly, is not only the place or artefacts and documents. In particular, it is the testimony of

---

<sup>8</sup> M. Owsiniński and P. Tarnowski (eds.), *Oferta edukacyjna*, Sztutowo, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Pomorska Teka Edukacyjna, <http://tekapomorska.pl> [accessed: 14.05.2019].

<sup>10</sup> M. Owsiniński (ed.), *Pamiętamy, pamiętam... Pomorze Gdańskie i obóz Stutthof 1939–1945. Materiały edukacyjne*, Warszawa-Sztutowo, 2012.

survival, the testimony of remembrance and post-camp reflections. For this reason, 10 years ago Museum staff began to gather audio and video accounts of former Stutthof camp prisoners within the framework of the documental and historical programme ‘Ostatni świadkowie’ (*The Last Witnesses*). We are interested not only in the duration of their incarceration in KL Stutthof, but also in their entire life as a witness of history. We have also included their families in the programme, as well as people who witnessed the events in which prisoners participated.

Apart from our educational projects addressed to young people, adults and teachers, at the Stutthof Museum we conduct activities aimed at creating a forum for sharing reflections and experiences for practitioners and theoreticians involved in remembrance, as well as the ways of shaping this remembrance in modern Polish martyrological museums. These activities, which also integrate the environment of museum staff representing institutions with a similar profile, are currently of a cyclical character.

The main exhibition plays a major role in the educational activities of the Stutthof Museum, and we have been working on its new form for some time already. The current exhibition was prepared in the 1980s. The new one will be a product of countless talks and discussions, especially from the verification of sources, following both discourse around controversies as well as searching for compromises. This process requires a lot of negotiation between the “permanent” character of history and the changing addressee-visitor. Based on comprehensive studies conducted among our target groups, we are able to say that the new main exhibition will function as a tool to understand, rather than to know, what the KL Stutthof death factory was. The aim of the exhibition is to guide the visitor through the tragedy of this place. It is aimed at showing the dominance of evil, the state of anomie of moral standards, and the destruction of dignity and humanity, as war and occupation equal destruction: total destruction.

Usually, the “host” of the exhibition is its curator – after the update, however, this role will be, in practice, assigned to our guides. The exhibition

will be a tool, supporting their work as specific “guardians” of history and as important links in the chain of museum education. The new form and content will definitely change the field of our basic activity, in practically every aspect.

Here, we reach the core of understanding the challenges of modern pedagogics at authentic memorial sites. Despite the common belief that the history of German concentration camp systems during the Second World War is well-known, it seems that the world has ignored the lessons coming from these events. Bloody conflicts between states, nations or ethnic and social groups remains our everyday reality and xenophobia is commonly accepted in some social groups. History clearly suggests where hatred leads to, as it is the fuel of such attitudes and actions. Museums and memorial sites, as expert institutions, should reinforce this message and remind people what direction the world took when nobody stood up and said no to these negative values. Thus, the words “UNDERSTAND STUTTHOF”, repeated frequently by us, are not just a slogan, but a contemporary challenge and, to some extent, also an important erudite tool of communication, thus constituting a tool of education.

But are we totally innocent here? Is a museum pedagogue, who remains in direct contact with visitors, able to meet the objectives that we have assumed? Our observations show that in general, this type of role in museums is usually assigned to those who best know the history of the place and the collected artefacts. Added value also comes from some personal qualities. But are these people appropriately qualified to share this knowledge? Telling interesting stories whilst having the authentic place and artefacts at our disposal differs from telling this story in a way that is comprehensible for its addressees. The challenge here lies in social history: in the interdisciplinary character of research, recognition and reflection. Disadvantaged groups, as well as people with disabilities, constitute another challenge and we should meet them well-prepared. Appropriate qualifications of a museum pedagogue thus constitute the key challenge not only at authentic memorial sites but in all museums. A pedagogue should, of course, possess not only the knowledge and skills

to achieve this, but also materials specifically targeted towards their audience's needs. And they are not a uniform group.

I hope that in the near future, the educational team of the Stutthof Museum will be ready to invite museum staff working in other institutions to jointly develop an Academy of Museum Pedagogues. This would constitute our contribution to pedagogical and educational future of museums and memorial sites.

\*\*\*

From a historical point of view, each generation needed and needs change, understood as the coexistence of processes of both change and constancy, as each generation is entitled to possess their own collection of questions regarding the historical process. This requires special reflection not only in scientific research, but also in terms of the message itself. This is a significant, dynamic change – the generation of witnesses of this history is passing away and we need to face this approaching void. The silence which is going to follow will be a great unknown, and a great challenge. On the other hand, there is this constancy: the protection of the reliable image of history and the voice of truth. Both these extremities are linked by museum staff and all those who take up this huge task together with them. We are in possession of hours of testimonies and memories which tell the story of life being beautiful as it is, because we live only once. Being ready to change and discovering in ourselves the courage to face this change: this is the challenge for future generations of museum staff, and museum pedagogues in particular. In order to understand!

MAŁGORZATA GRZANKA

## Education at the Museum of the Former German Extermination Camp Kulmhof in Chełmno-on-the-Ner

The Museum of the former German Nazi extermination camp Kulmhof in Chełmno-on-the-Ner is a memorial to the first German Nazi extermination Centre Kulmhof, which was commissioned on 8 December 1941 for the immediate extermination of Jews in the Wartheland, a district of the Reich created from part of the Polish lands incorporated into Germany. The camp began operating even before the Wannsee Conference took place. The number of victims is estimated at approximately 200,000. Kulmhof was the only camp where trucks – mobile gas chambers – were used for extermination. Furthermore, the camp in Chełmno was the longest operating camp and the only one that was closed down and later reopened. It was also in Chełmno that many Nazi functionaries broadened their experience, which was later used in subsequent extermination and concentration camps created in occupied Poland. Today, the Memorial Site is part of the landscape of Chełmno village, located in the eastern part of the Wielkopolska Province, in the County of Koło, bordering the provinces of Łódź and Kujawy-Pomerania.

The Museum takes care of the former camp premises, secures it and preserves all the relics that testify to the crimes perpetrated there. It commemorates the victims of the Holocaust through scientific, promotional, educational and exhibition activities.

Educational activities conducted by the Museum in Chełmno-on-the-Ner are currently one of the most important tasks carried out by the institution. Its development has become part of a series of

necessary measures taken several years ago to improve the image of the institution. In 2014, within the framework of the project ‘Preserving European and World Cultural Heritage’, an investment project was undertaken at the former German extermination camp Kulmhof in Chełmno-on-the-Ner, which improved its museum and tourism value. The project included, amongst other elements, tidying up the area of the Rzuchowski Forest (the site of the victims’ cemetery, four kilometres away from Chełmno), introducing new forms of commemoration and commissioning of the historical service pavilion along with the audio-visual room located therein. In this way, the basic educational facility was created. Following the renovation of the pavilion in the Rzuchowski Forest, the facility was expanded to include a second conference room. Other projects already implemented by the Museum, such as the renovation of the granary and preparation of a new exhibition concept in it, and the ongoing work on the main exhibition as well as the conservation and exhibition of the ruins of the palace will undoubtedly improve the educational value of the place.<sup>11</sup> These projects, therefore, provide further opportunities for the development of educational undertakings. In 2014, work also began on an educational programme which would initiate the concept of extracurricular historical education implemented by the Kulmhof Museum and Memorial whilst referring to the models of Holocaust education that have been implemented in other authentic memorial sites for many years.<sup>12</sup> This programme was first offered to schools. It is constantly

<sup>11</sup> The granary is the only original building associated with the camp infrastructure that survived the war. In the first period of the camp’s operation, it was used as a storehouse for the victims’ belongings, while in the second period, it served as a prison for Jewish workers forced to work for the extermination camps (A. Grzegorzyc and P. Wąsowicz, *Obóz zagłady Kulmhof w Chełmnie nad Nerem. Przewodnik po Miejscu Pamięci*, Chełmno nad Nerem, 2016, pp. 43–45). The palace constituted a part of the former landed estate in Chełmno. It was the most important part of the camp infrastructure, because it was used to prepare victims for extermination. It was demolished by the camp crew on 11 April 1943. Only the cellars of the building survived (Ibid, pp. 39–42).

<sup>12</sup> J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, L. Hońdo (eds.), *Dlaczego należy uczyć o Holokauście?*, Kraków, 2005; P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz i Holokaust. Dylematy i wyzwania polskiej edukacji*, Oświęcim, 2008; M. Owsiański (ed.), *Pamiętamy, pamiętamy*; P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz*

being modified, and its circle of recipients is growing. Currently, the educational activities of the Museum in Chełmno are mainly attended by pupils and teachers of primary and secondary schools, students, as well as various social and professional groups (e.g. seniors, detainees, local government officials), mainly from the Wielkopolska, Łódź and Kujawy-Pomerania provinces. Our audience is determined by both the geographical location of the institution and the strong historical links between the Memorial Site and the region. The Museum also hosts study groups from Germany, Scandinavia, France, Ukraine, Canada and the United States.

The aim of historical reflection in the educational activities of the Museum is to explore the history of the first German death camp, Kulmhof, in its many dimensions, as well as the extermination policy towards the Jewish population conducted by the Third Reich in the Wartheland during World War II, at various stages of the Holocaust. Starting with the first forms of terror employed at the turn of 1939 and 1940, through the systematic ghettoization and creation of a network of labour camps, to the direct extermination in Kulmhof, the deportation of the last victims from the Litzmannstadt Ghetto ended in July 1944. It is worth noting the exceptional occupation conditions prevailing on the Polish territories directly annexed to the Third Reich. Another subject of interest is the extermination of the Roma and Sinti and other national and social groups. The extermination carried out as part of *Aktion T4* and the so-called “wild euthanasia” in Wartheland, which was perpetrated by future Kulmhof *SS-Sonderkommando*, is subject to special reflection. It is also important to highlight the historical links between the death camp and the region of Wielkopolska, and the regions of Łódź and Kuyavia. In so doing, it also emphasises the local dimension of the Holocaust and the extermination of small Jewish communities inhabiting villages and towns in the region for centuries. Exploration of these more detailed studies is

---

*i Holocaust. Edukacja w szkole i w miejscu pamięci*, Oświęcim, 2014; T. Kranz (ed.), *Muzea w poobozowych miejscach pamięci. Tożsamość, znaczenia, funkcje*, Lublin, 2017; K. Chmielewska, A. Molisak (eds.), *Pomnik pamięci. Miejsca niepamięci*, Warszawa, 2017.

particularly possible during extended study visits or work with groups that are especially interested in the history of specific Jewish communities. Reflection on the Holocaust from the perspective of regional history also results in a reflection on the contemporary socio-cultural landscape of this part of Poland.

Historical reflection is the basis for humanistic considerations of philosophical, civic and moral nature.

In its basic scope, the most popular form of education implemented in the Museum are one-day study visits. The first part of these visits constitutes a direct encounter with the authentic historical space, which is undoubtedly an exceptional value of these Memorials.<sup>13</sup> Such space is created in Chełmno by two places. The first is the area of the former property, including the ruins of the palace cellars, park and granary – the only survivors, as well as the most important “witnesses”, of this crime, located on the outskirts of the Chełmno village. The second is the cemetery in the Rzuchowski Forest. The connection with the Holocaust landscape begins there, at the so-called Section I with the centrally located Monument to the Victims of the Holocaust, and ends at the Wall of Remembrance, by walking through the symbolic gate. The distance between the village of Chełmno and the forest is four kilometres. Visitors can navigate the post-camp area independently, in complete silence, or with a guide. Organised groups are almost always accompanied by a guide, whose narration is complemented by reading and analysing documents – accounts of direct witnesses of the crime and victims of Kulmhof – read at points of historical significance.

The account of the camp escapee, Szlom Winer, is read at the palace cellars in Chełmno, and the *Testament of the Last Prisoners* in the granary. Subsequent accounts are read in the forest, at the mass graves, the remains of the crematoria, the Wall of Remembrance...Direct contact with documents created by the prisoners provides recipients with a first

---

<sup>13</sup> W. Wysok, „Teoretyczne założenia pedagogiki pamięci. Wokół podstawowych definicji i pojęć”, in: T. Kranz (ed.), *Pedagogika pamięci. O teorii i praktyce edukacji w muzeach martyrologicznych*, Lublin, 2018, pp. 100–102.

encounter with the personal stories of the victims of the camp; it also helps to self-discover the truth about the place and its individual experiences, and finally to experience emotions. The existence of symbolic, metaphorical and institutional elements in the historical space provokes reflection on the importance of authentic historical sites for shaping contemporary memory culture, on the need to recall, and on the need to fulfil the request for memory contained in the words of the last prisoners. You will require at least two hours for a guided tour of both Memorials.

The second part of the study visit at the Museum constitutes educational activities, largely based on work with source materials, which include accounts created by Holocaust victims and witnesses of crimes, photographs documenting the various stages of persecution of Jews in the Wartheland, archival films and artefacts – testimonies of the earth. The collection consists of both sources created during the Second World War, of various provenance, and post-war sources. The source material includes commentaries by prominent contemporary Holocaust researchers. Such a rich and varied collection allows us to discuss many issues with particular articulation and showing diversified perspectives. The most important of these is the perspective of the victim. Attempts to discover individual biographies, the fragments of which can only be read based on accounts, letters, hastily scribbled notes and artefacts, are the subject of deep reflection for the course participants. It will also help students see the enormous suffering experienced by Holocaust victims and provide them with an opportunity to understand the mechanisms of the Holocaust and the entangled fate of each individual in the history of the world. Work with artefacts and reading into their hidden meanings is a unique opportunity. Discovering the history of individuals, families and communities enclosed in these unique carriers of the past also leads to discovering their fate, unveiling fragments of the image of life in ghettos and brutal deportations. In this way, it is possible to discover and consolidate so-called micro-histories, show individual experiences and fears triggered by the Holocaust (both observed and experienced), and desperate attempts to search for rescue and preserve personal

dignity. The emphasis on “name-based” analysis of the historical process is not just biography as fate, but also proof: there is no history without names. It is worth remembering that not only do millions of victims of the Second World War do not have graves, but they also remain nameless. In the attempt to present a holistic and multi-layered image of this history, it is also necessary to show the perspective of the witnesses and the perpetrators of the crime, in accordance with the overwhelming perspective in the literature on the subject of perpetrators – victims – witnesses.<sup>14</sup> Reflection on these memories and events are facilitated by working with contemporary forms of commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust. Our responsibility today is to search for connections between the past, what is happening and what may happen in the future; the need to remember and to continue to recollect is the subject of constant reflection. This mission is particularly interesting to explore with younger participants (e.g. students in their last year of primary school), with whom the only possible way to accentuate selected lessons from the Holocaust is to reach for contemporary youth literature on the subject, written by the third and fourth post-Holocaust generations. Such texts, accompanied by appropriate historical commentaries, play an excellent role as the first encounter with the subject of the Holocaust and related Memorial Sites, while preparing the reader for a broader exploration of the subject at further stages of education and subsequent meetings with historical testimonies of the Holocaust.<sup>15</sup>

Since 2016, the Museum has been working with secondary schools and the County Office in the Szamotuły County on the implementation of an educational project entitled, ‘Visits to Memorial Sites in

<sup>14</sup> See e.g. Raul Hilberg, *Sprawcy, ofiary, świadkowie. Zagłada Żydów 1933–1945*, Warszawa, 2007; A. Bartuś (ed.), *Świadkowie: Między ofiarą a sprawcą zbrodni*, Oświęcim, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Literature for children and teenagers on the subject of the Holocaust has been written, among others, by M. Wójcik-Dudek, *W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży*, Katowice, 2016; M. Wójcik-Dudek, *Konieczność śladu. Kanony literatury dla dzieci i młodzieży*. Text available at [www.cejsh.icm.edu.pl](http://www.cejsh.icm.edu.pl) [accessed: 28.08.2019]; S. J. Żurek, „Zagłada w najnowszej polskiej literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży”, *Teksty Drugie*, 2, (2017), pp. 184–194.

Wielkopolska', which includes a series of one-day study visits for first form secondary school students to historical places associated with the Second World War and the martyrdom of the citizens of the Second Republic of Poland. Within the framework of the project, the students visit, among others, the Museum in Chełmno-on-the-Ner and the Museum of Martyrdom in Żabikowo. The initiators of the project are history teachers, who acknowledged the need for extended education about the Holocaust implemented in authentic memorial sites, as well as highlighting the existence of such places in the landscape of Wielkopolska. The project was preceded by a study visit of teachers, most of whom were visiting the Museum for the first time, during which they visited the premises of the camp and participated in workshops on archival and archaeological sources related to the history of the German extermination camp Kulmhof in Chełmno-on-the-Ner in historical education. The meeting with teachers was aimed at preparing them for a visit to the Museum and Memorial Site with their pupils, as well as defining the goals of the project and indicating the educational opportunities available to their institutions. The students' visits are organised as a one-day study visit, which includes a tour of the former camp grounds, exhibitions and participation in educational activities. The final stage of the project is its summary and evaluation in schools. Participation in the project is highly appreciated by both teachers and the students themselves.

Encouraging other teachers or local authorities from the region to develop similar projects or organise individual trips to the Museum is certainly a major challenge for the Museum. In 2015, the Museum in Chełmno, in collaboration with the Museum of Martyrdom in Żabikowo and the Department of History Didactics at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, developed an educational package called, 'The German Extermination Camp Kulmhof: Educational Materials for Teachers' addressed to those who want to prepare young people for a visit to the Museum and Memorial site, incorporate classes on the subject of the first German Nazi death camp in their lesson plans, or broaden their

knowledge of the Second World War and occupation in Wielkopolska.<sup>16</sup> The leading theme of the ‘Prisoners’ package, for example, required project participants to choose appropriate source material, based on which lesson plans were developed. The recordings of witnesses sharing their memories of the observed or experienced Holocaust are of exceptional value. The package is the first part of the planned cycle of 10 thematic volumes entitled *From the Archives of the Museums in Chełmno-on-the-Ner and Żabikowo*. So far, two volumes have been published: *Forced Labour Camps for Jews in Wielkopolska* and *Citizens of Wielkopolska in the Penal and Investigative Camp in Żabikowo*.<sup>17</sup> The publication was accompanied by educational seminars under the umbrella title ‘Memory and Education’ held at the Department of History Didactics of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań.

The aim of building awareness of the common goals of Museums and Memorial Sites and schools at various levels of education, as well as promoting the idea of extracurricular historical education, also serves to establish co-operation with teacher training Centres, which address their educational programmes to teachers and schools in the region.<sup>18</sup> The Museum organised a seminar called ‘The Museum as an Institution Supporting Historical and Patriotic Education’ in collaboration with the Teacher Training Centre in Konin, which co-ordinates the work of schools in four counties: Konin, Kolo, Turek and Slupsk. We hope that the co-operation with the Centre, as an institution encouraging teachers to take up new forms of professional development and promoting modern education, a substantial part of which may be implemented outside the

<sup>16</sup> R. Wełniak (ed.), *Niemiecki obóz zagłady Kulmhof. Materiały dydaktyczne dla nauczycieli*, vol. 1, Żabikowo, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> R. Wełniak (ed.), *Obozy pracy przymusowej dla Żydów w Wielkopolsce. Materiały dydaktyczne dla nauczycieli*, vol. 2, Luboń, 2016; J. Nawrocik and R. Wełniak (eds.), *Scenariusze lekcji i karty pracy z tomu Wielkopole w obozie karno-śledczym w Żabikowie*, Luboń, 2017 are available on the website of the Museum of Martyrdom in Żabikowo: [www.zabikowo.eu](http://www.zabikowo.eu) [accessed: 14.05.2019].

<sup>18</sup> A. Stępnik, „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejsku pamięci z punktu widzenia dydaktyka historii”, in: T. Kranz (ed.), *Wizyty edukacyjne w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Poradnik dla nauczycieli*, Lublin, 2012, pp. 51–63.

school, will develop in the future and the Museum will be perceived as an important educational institution in the Konin sub-region.

Our common objectives were also emphasised during a series of meetings with representatives of local governments, representing cities and municipalities from the Eastern Wielkopolska region. A series of study visits were prepared on the 74th anniversary of the deportation of Jews from this region to the Kulmhof extermination camp. During the visit, local government officials explored the Memorial and participated in historical workshops. The meetings were also intended to encourage local governments, as authorities in charge of schools, to create convenient conditions for schools that wish to take advantage of the extracurricular educational activities provided by the Museum. Representatives of local governments are an important group of participants in the activities of the Museum.

Educational tours following traces of memory and the trail of places associated with the life and extermination of Jewish communities inhabiting the pre-war borderlands of the three regions, which have been organised for high school students for several years, are of great cognitive value. Learning about the history of Jews from this area and reading the signs of remembrance present in the contemporary landscapes of towns and cities, which attest to their pre-war multiculturalism and multinationalism, serve to build not only historical reflection, but also awareness of the existence of the centuries-old coexistence of nations, the brutality of its end and the consequences for subsequent generations. The acquisition of in-depth knowledge about the causes and circumstances of the deaths of Polish Jews, legitimate citizens of the Polish state, also shapes the ability to perceive absence and loss in Polish spaces. Furthermore, young people get the chance to meet local leaders who work to restore and preserve the memory of murdered Jewish inhabitants of the borderlands.

The Museum also runs two-day study visits, which are mainly attended by young people from abroad. Longer stays provide an opportunity to reflect on the history of the first German death camp, Kulmhof.

The work-camp youth camps, which have been organised at the Museum in Chełmno since 2015, are a unique educational undertaking. This form of education draws on similar forms of work with young people that have been practised in other museums and memorial sites for years. It is a two-week residential study visit for an international group of young people who have the opportunity to learn more about the history of the Kulmhof death camp and the occupation of the Wartheland. They also learn about the history of Jewish communities that inhabited this part of occupied Poland during the war. To this end, they participate in workshops, lectures, film screenings and scientific tours. For the work-camp participants, the cleaning and maintenance works they carry out on the post-camp site, allowing direct contact with the Memorial space, are of particular significance. The meetings with representatives of local communities, e.g. regional historians dealing with the history of the Jews, as well as with representatives of the Jewish community in Łódź, are also an unusual history lesson, as they testify to the presence of Jewish culture in Poland.

Anniversaries commemorating the most important events in the history of the camp, which involve mainly young people, representatives of the local community and external guests, are of exceptional educational value. By highlighting these events and their importance in both global and regional Holocaust history, they are taken into consideration in the annual activity planning of some schools and institutions in the region. One such examples of a commemorative project was called, '8.12.1941: The Story of the First Transport to the Kulmhof Death Camp in Chełmno-on-the-Ner,' organised in collaboration with the Economic and Administrative Schools Complex in Koło on the 76th anniversary of the opening of the Kulmhof death camp and the extermination of Koło Jews – the first victims of the Centre in Chełmno. Educational activities at the school, devoted to the history of the Jewish community in the town and a walk through sites of memory of Koło's Jewish community, prepared young people for a visit to the Memorial Site in Chełmno. The project was highly appreciated by its participants. It was

particularly valuable for them to gain fresh knowledge on the history of the Jewish community in Koło and the circumstances of its extermination. The commemoration project 'Request and Memory: Fulfilling the Last Will of the Last Prisoners of the Camp,' was implemented on the 73rd anniversary of the liquidation of the Kulmhof death camp, in co-operation with students and teachers from local schools, senior citizens and representatives of the Jewish Community in Łódź. Senior citizens were a particularly active group, focused around third-age universities, for whom the series of classes prepared at that time involved various records of personal and collective experiences of the Holocaust period. The Roma experience was also included in the discussions as a form of commemoration of the 76th anniversary of the deportation of over 4,000 Austrian Roma and Sinti, prisoners of the so-called Gypsy camp located in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, to the Kulmhof death camp. They were all murdered in the mobile gas chambers between 2 and 9 January 1942. During the classes, participants had the opportunity to explore unique testimonies given by Holocaust victims and witnesses – written texts, video accounts and photographs – as well as share their personal and family experiences from World War II. The great value of the activities that can be implemented in the Museum, at school or in the urban space, is the possibility of longer contact with the issues raised by the Holocaust, combining disciplines and methodologies. Unfortunately, a single, short visit to the Memorial does not provide such possibilities.

The memory of Stanisław Kaszyński, former secretary of the Chełmno community, who attempted to inform the Polish Underground State and presumably the international community of the ongoing extermination in Kulmhof, is of particular importance for the local community living in Chełmno and Koło County.<sup>19</sup> Several years ago, the Museum

---

<sup>19</sup> Before the war, Stanisław Kaszyński was the secretary of the Chełmno community, enjoying the respect and regard of the local population. He was an exceptionally active community worker. Following the commencement of the war, Kaszyński remained in office, but in a lower position. With the establishment of the death camp in the village, Kaszyński, mindful of all consequences, decided to inform the world about the Holocaust. In undetermined circumstances, he began collaborating with the Polish Underground State,

initiated the process of restoring the memory of this man. In addition to the obelisk symbolically commemorating the hero situated in the Rzuchowski Forest, an annual commemoration of the anniversary of the murder of Kaszyński by Kulmhof *SS-Sonderkommando* has taken place since 2017, with the participation of students and teachers from the Primary School in Chełmno-on-the-Ner, representatives of local authorities and the family of the murdered. On the 75th anniversary of his death, a popular science session was held, dedicated to the underground activity of the “silent” hero from Chełmno-on-the-Ner and the fate of his family. The meeting with his son, also named Stanisław Kaszyński, was particularly valuable.

The ceremony commemorating the 56 Poles arrested by the German military police and SS in the autumn of 1939 in the Rzuchowski forest, who were executed on 15 November 1939 during one of several such actions carried out in the first months of the war in occupied Poland, is of a similar character and significance to local residents. In 1991, a memorial altar was erected in the Rzuchowski Forest at the execution and burial site of the victims. Its presence in the public space commemorates the first arrested residents of Koło County, thus obliging the Museum to preserve the memory of all the victims of World War II.

The March of Memory, organised in collaboration with the County Office in Koło since 2013, is of great educational value. The March, which in its form alludes to long-standing marches in historical places, is an important event for the Museum in Chełmno. It takes place at the Memorial in the Rzuchowski Forest, via the Monument to the Holocaust Victims to the Wall of Remembrance. Its primary objective is to

---

transferring reports from the area. In January 1942, he independently took the initiative to convey information about the crimes committed in Kulmhof to the West. He wrote a letter that was given to the International Red Cross in Switzerland. According to other testimonies, the letter was to be addressed to an undefined diplomatic post in Switzerland or to a Swiss consulate in Berlin. The information about Kaszyński's initiative came to the attention of the Kulmhof *Sonderkommando*. Kaszyński was arrested and shot after a few days. The tragic fate of Stanisław was also shared by his wife Karolina. Interrogated by the Gestapo, then arrested and imprisoned in Łódź, she was murdered in 1942. Their four children were made orphans.

remind the public of the Holocaust, which was committed in a landscape familiar to them. The unique, reflective atmosphere accompanying the participants of the March creates a kind of memory community and allows one to recapture this familiar space. The participants of the March always walk in silence. While marching in silence, with a background of sounds emerging from the forest (the sound of leaves rustling or birds singing), one can experience the space where life and death meet simultaneously. The involvement of young people from local schools in the organisation and preparation of this artistic setting is of immense value. Every year, the ceremony is attended by representatives of provincial and local authorities, representatives of local organisations, associations, institutions and Jewish communities, as well as students and teachers from counties of the three provinces. The scope of impact is therefore broad, and subsequent editions of this event prove that this formula has been approved by numerous groups. It is the only initiative of its kind in the Greater Poland Province. The march in the Rzuchowski Forest is perceived by its participants as an unusual history lesson. The performance of young singers from the Children's Choir of the City of Łódź, who poignantly recite Jewish songs sung in the Łódź ghetto, has been etched into the memory of the participants of the March in Rzuchów. The practice of memorial marches also affects local initiatives. In 2018, in Kutno, a March of Memory commemorating the local Jews was held for the first time on the historical route connecting the town with the area of the former ghetto.

Co-operation with groups with special needs is undeniably an educational challenge for Museums and Memorials. In working with them, the circles of humanistic, moral, social and civic values and attitudes promoted by these institutions become particularly poignant. So far, the Museum has hosted prisoners and educators from the Fordon Penitentiary Facility. Their study visit, which included a guided tour of the post-camp site and specially designed educational activities, certainly possessed a unique educational value, used in the rehabilitation programme conducted by the facility. In 2015, the Museum in Chełmno-on-the-Ner was a partner

of an original project carried out by the educators of the Detention Facility in Łódź – ‘Jews, Gypsies, *Lodzermensche* (Aliens)’ – which was also prepared in collaboration with the Radegast Station Museum and the Łódź branch of the Institute of National Remembrance. As part of the programme outside the Museum, a series of educational classes was organised for prisoners on the history of the Kulmhof death camp in Chełmno-on-the-Ner and the German occupation of the Wartheland. Stays for young people with intellectual disabilities are also being prepared with the utmost care and responsibility.

The creation and deepening of the awareness that the Museum in Chełmno commemorates the first place of mass extermination of Jews, and therefore constitutes a valuable place on the maps of the historical and cultural heritage of Poland, the world and the region, is one of the most important educational challenges facing the institution. The conviction that no narrative about the Holocaust can replace direct encounters with sites of the Holocaust or contact with the existing artefacts and testimonies, should be an argument for a part of humanities education, including historical education, to be implemented beyond the walls of schools or institutions that bring together groups interested in exploring the history of the landscapes of the Holocaust. And even if we limit this to a single visit to the Memorial, it will become evident that the history of the Holocaust cannot be explored without the history of Kulmhof. The educational services of the Museum are undoubtedly an interesting proposal that support programmes offered by schools and institutions. We hope that, through further development and systematic co-operation with various groups, the history of the first Nazi German death camp will be continually rediscovered, bringing with it a universal truth about the consequences of hatred and disregard for the lives of others.

JOANNA PODOLSKA

# What do the Stones Tell Us? Education and Memory of the Place: The Example of the Bałuty District and the Łódź Ghetto in the Activity of the Dialogue Centre

The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź is quite a specific institution. Even if it does not meet the traditional Polish definition of a memorial site and it does not take direct care of any object of national martyrology, its activity is fully dedicated to memory, particularly the memory of the Łódź Ghetto and the history of both victims and survivors of the Shoah.<sup>20</sup> Due to the immediate vicinity of memorial sites, as well as assigning to institution staff the task of remembrance of historical events, in some of its aspects the Centre functions according to the same principles as education departments in museums, but due to its completely different specificity, structure and mission, in many cases these activities vary or even differ significantly.

## The Institution

The Dialogue Centre was established by decision of Łódź City Council in August 2010.<sup>21</sup> Two months later, through the initiative of one of the councillors, the Centre was named after Marek Edelman, social and political activist, the last leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Honorary Citizen of the City of Łódź, on the first anniversary of his

---

<sup>20</sup> According to the Polish definition, a memorial site is a “grave or war cemetery, roadside cross, a chapel, a mound, a property or building, or else its remnants commemorate persons or events important to the Polish Nation and State, and in particular a commemorative board,” (from the Sejm of the Republic of Poland draft act as of 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Resolution number XCII/1647/10 of Łódź City Council as of 25 August 2010, on establishing the cultural institution under the name the Dialogue Centre in Łódź.

death. The institution started its activities at the beginning of 2011. Since 2014, it is located in a new, specially-designed building situated in the Survivors' Park, where Memory Trees dedicated to Holocaust survivors grow, in the vicinity of such memorials as the Monument Honouring Poles who Saved Jews During the Second World War, the Żegota obelisk and the Remembrance Mound with Jan Karski's bench.<sup>22</sup> The activity of the Centre is also influenced by the area of the Łódź Ghetto located a short distance away, together with the places on Przemysłowa Street where the so-called Gypsy camp and the Camp for Polish Children were situated, as well as the Jewish cemetery and Radegast Station. It is, at the same time, one of a few cultural institutions situated within the area of the former Bałuty district, which among Łódź's citizens, as well as in the collective memory of Poles, is notorious for being a difficult and dangerous place for over a century. What is more, the district of Bałuty is marked by the trauma of the Second World War, in particular the establishment of the ghetto but also other tragic events. The "exorcism" and "disenchantment" of this part of the city is another objective the Łódź Dialogue Centre has set for itself.

---

<sup>22</sup> The Survivors' Park was established in 2004 in connection with commemorative events organised by the City of Łódź on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto. Its origins refer to the idea of Halina Elczewska, Łódź Ghetto survivor, to plant a row of trees symbolizing Holocaust survivors in Łódź. On 30 August 2004, the first Memory Trees were planted by 387 people – survivors who came to the ceremony from all over the world. The area was gradually transformed into a park. Its spatial and plant arrangements were designed by Grażyna Ojrzyńska and Maria Herszel. The Monument to the Righteous among the Nations – Poles Rescuing the Jews During the Second World War was unveiled in August 2009, on the occasion of the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto. It was designed by Czesław Bielecki. The obelisk dedicated to "Żegota" – the Council to Aid Jews with the Government Delegation for Poland was erected in the Survivors' Park in August 2009, designed by Zbigniew Dudek. The monument of Jan Karski sitting on a bench on the Remembrance Mound was created by the artist Karol Badyňa and unveiled in August 2009. The mound has a view of the Survivors' Park and, from the top, one can also see the Monument to the Righteous among the Nations – Poles Who Rescued Jews during the Second World War.

## Statute

The Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź, according to its statute, is an open and secular cultural institution acting beyond political divisions. Its main aim is to conduct educational and cultural activity, referring in particular to popularizing the heritage of different cultures, promoting the multicultural and multi-ethnic legacy of the city of Łódź, with particular attention paid – as emphasized in the statute – to Jewish culture, and promoting the idea of tolerance as well as preventing the manifestation of racism, xenophobia and lack of respect towards people representing different worldviews, origins and cultures.<sup>23</sup>

Educational activity regarding this multicultural aspect is addressed to both members of Polish and foreign communities who visit the institution and the city of Łódź more and more frequently. Among the foreign visitors are researchers and journalists, teachers and students of history and those in other faculties involved in remembrance activities. There are also students from different countries coming to Poland for touristic purposes, but with education connected with the history of the Second World War, and in particular history of the Holocaust, the most prominent aspect of their visit. The statute of the Dialogue Centre also states that its aim is to realize projects commemorating the Jewish community of Łódź as well as activities commemorating the survivors and the Righteous and their families, which have been taking place since 2011. On behalf of the Łódź city authorities, each year the Dialogue Centre organises municipal commemorative events dedicated to the history of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto and the so-called Gypsy camp (established by the Germans within the ghetto in November 1941 and liquidated three months later). It also supervises and organises the awarding of Memory Trees in the Survivors' Park to those who lived to see the end of the Shoah.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Statute of Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź. Annex to the Resolution LXXXIII/1754/14 of Łódź City Council as of 9 April 2014, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/o-nas/statut> [accessed: 30.04.3019].

<sup>24</sup> Each person or family with a Memory Tree in the Survivors' Park obtains a certificate signed by the Mayor of Łódź as well as a plaque with their name installed along the park alley.

From the very beginning of its functioning, however, the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź has been involved in broad educational activities, in organizing cultural events (including the Łódź of Four Cultures Festival) and the range of activities of the institution includes also publishing and promoting these events and programmes.<sup>25</sup> Projects prepared by the Centre represent both a local and international character.

## Education

The Łódź Dialogue Centre was established especially to remember and teach about the past, but at the same time to draw from conclusions about history that will make it possible for future generations to build a better future. This has been the mission of the institution from the beginning of its operation. For this reason, the majority of projects represent very up-to-date contexts, according to the adopted principle: TO REMEMBER, TO UNDERSTAND, TO ACT.

1. Remembering the past
2. Understanding the present
3. Building a better future

### 1. Remembering the past

In order to discover the past and teach history, the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre has created a diversified educational programme addressed to all age groups: for primary and secondary school students, university students, including those taking part in the Erasmus programme, as well as lectures and workshops for adults (including study groups from the Universities of the Third Age). An offer of educational services has been developed, which can be implemented both at the Dialogue Centre and

---

<sup>25</sup> The Festival – initially under the name of the Four Cultures Dialogue Festival – was initiated in 2002 by Witold Knychalski. From 2005 it was led by different people; from 2011 it continued under the name Łódź of Four Cultures; and, since 2017, the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre in Łódź has been its organiser.

in schools, depending on teachers' needs and what the Centre can offer in terms of available staff and meeting dates.<sup>26</sup> Regular classes are devoted to the history of the Second World War; the history of and life in the Litzmannstadt Ghetto; and the multicultural character of the city of Łódź. Notable figures important for both Łódź and Poland are also discussed, such as Jan Karski, Marek Edelman and Arnold Mostowicz, as well as the controversial Chaim Rumkowski and other important individuals, including survivors of the Łódź Ghetto like Halina Elczewska or Leon Weintraub and the Righteous Among the Nations – Poles who rescued Jews during the Second World War. In addition, a subject is selected each year, around which a special educational programme is prepared, accompanied by separate events.

The year 2014 was dedicated to Jan Karski, a native of Łódź, an aspect that remains crucial to the city's identity. In April 2014, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jan Karski's birth, a large biographical exhibition 'Karski: Not to Let the World Forget' was inaugurated in the new building in co-operation with the National Cultural Centre. Its curator was Jarosław Suchan.<sup>27</sup> For nearly two years, the exhibition was accompanied by many different educational activities, film screenings, lectures and open meetings. In 2013, the Courier's Club was established by the Dialogue Centre for students of Łódź secondary schools interested in history, who would not only discover Jan Karski's history and mission themselves, but then also educate their peers on this subject, thus becoming emissaries of history. A group of enthusiasts even followed Karski's route through Poland.<sup>28</sup> Young emissaries visited places such as Warsaw, Izbica and Bełżec, Kraków and Nowy Sącz, as well as observing the route of the Tatra couriers. The project was subsidized by the Polish History

<sup>26</sup> Dialogue Centre Educational offer, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/projekty-edukacyjne> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>27</sup> Virtual tour of the exhibition, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/wydarzenia/1494-wirtualny-spacer-po-wystawie-qkarski-nie-da-wiatu-zapomnieq> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>28</sup> "I Ty zostań kurierem" (Become a courier yourself), <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/projekty-edukacyjne/klub-kuriera> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

Museum in Warsaw within the framework of the project ‘The Patriotism of Tomorrow’ and continues today. An important role was played by the monuments situated in the Survivors’ Park in the activities implemented by the Dialogue Centre, particularly Karski’s Bench, the Żegota obelisk and the Monument Honouring Poles who Saved Jews. These places have also become the location of an educational game addressed to teenagers entitled ‘Mission: Karski’, in which places like Paris, London and Washington played their roles. Players also, however, discover the fate of Jewish residents of the Warsaw Ghetto and the history of the extermination camps to which the Jews were sent. They also have the chance to get to know about Jan Karski’s report.

In 2016, students of Łódź schools who registered for the Courier’s Club (the recruitment process is conducted at schools, but is of voluntary character, based on extracurricular classes) became involved in the topic of the Righteous Among the Nations. They collected information about Poles rescuing Jews during the Second World War, exploring the biographies of many distinguished people, both famous ones such as Irena Sendlerowa, Jan Karski and Władysław Bartoszewski, but also of the silent heroes with little information available about them. One example is Zofia Libich from Łódź, who rescued Hana Ostern Svirski, a girl of whom she had been taking care. Hana Svirski, a Holocaust survivor living in Israel, managed to obtain the Medal of the Righteous Among the Nations for her guardian; Zofia was awarded posthumously by the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem. On the initiative of the Dialogue Centre, in 2014 Zofia Libich’s name was included on the Monument Honouring Poles who Saved Jews, among other Righteous. In this way, both ladies are symbolically present in Łódź: Hana Svirski has a Memory Tree in the Survivors’ Park, as she survived the Shoah, and Zofia Libich has a plaque on the monument of the Righteous as a person who rescued a Jewish girl.

After discovering the history of the Righteous Among the Nations, the teenager members of the Courier’s Club wrote articles published in special magazines entitled *Report 2016: The Righteous*, printed and distributed in some partner educational institutions throughout Poland,

and then published on the Dialogue Centre website.<sup>29</sup> Those described by Łódź high school students included Jerzy Lerski, Anna and Maria Sawicka, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka and the Ulm Family.

Also in 2016, the Dialogue Centre began the organization of the European Day of Remembrance of the Righteous in Łódź – a day established by the European Parliament aimed at honouring the memory of individuals who opposed the totalitarian regimes and mass crimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Near the Monument to the Righteous in the Survivors' Park, tribute is paid in particular to those who helped the Jews during the Second World War, but the noble attitudes of all those who behaved in a dignified way in those difficult times is also recognised. These activities are addressed primarily to students, but also to the citizens of Łódź and tourists. The Survivors' Park, together with the monuments situated within it and connected with the memory of the Second World War, have become an important element of education, as with the Memory Trees planted by the survivors of the Łódź Ghetto.<sup>30</sup> The number of trees is increasing each year because the children or grandchildren of survivors want to have a symbolic tree planted for their loved ones in the Survivors' Park. Education connected with survivors is an intrinsic part of the Dialogue Centre educators' narrative who, while guiding their groups through the exhibitions and the Park, tell the stories of Halina Elczewska, Leon Weintraub, Tova Ben Zvi and others whose biographies are important to this history.<sup>31</sup>

Unveiled in 2009, the Monument to the Righteous Among the Nations – upon which the names of several thousand Polish medal holders

<sup>29</sup> The reports are available at the Home Army Museum in Kraków, the Grodzka Gate in Lublin, the Museum of Poles Rescuing the Jews in Markowa, and the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews, among others. Report 2016: The Righteous, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/ebooks/sprawiedliwi/> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>30</sup> Since 2004, over 600 Memory Trees have been planted in the Survivors' Park, and there are new ones added each year.

<sup>31</sup> The Dialogue Centre hosts a permanent exhibition dedicated to the survivors, the character of which changes every several years. Among others, there is information about individuals involved in Polish-Jewish dialogue, who played a crucial role in commemorating the history of the Łódź Ghetto: Arnold Mostowicz, Josef Buchmann, Jehuda Widawski, Zvi Bergman and so on.

are written – has witnessed numerous individual, emotional moments from foreign tourists visiting Łódź, discovering the names of individuals that rescued their nearest and dearest during the Second World War. But it is also important to note that the Righteous from Łódź are absent on the monument. The city, incorporated into the Reich during World War Two and having its name changed to Litzmannstadt, was at that time inhabited to a large extent by the Germans and strictly separated from the ghetto. The case of Zofia Libich constitutes here a glorious exception.<sup>32</sup>

The Żegota obelisk also plays a significant educational role, as this place is suitable for sharing information regarding the role of this organization in rescuing Polish Jews, as does Jan Karski's monument. His determination in informing the world about the extermination of Jews taking place on occupied Polish ground arouses interest and great respect. The figure of Karski is a perfect starting point for discussing the world's reaction to news about the Shoah and developing students' knowledge about the Polish Underground State and the Home Army. Yet Karski also provides an occasion to reflect on political aspects of international communities getting involved in, or abstaining from, actively opposing the genocide and acts of hatred both during and since the Second World War.

After the 'Year of the Righteous', the theme of education in 2017 was the fate of children during the Second World War. The all-year programme 'Children of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' was motivated by the so-called Wielka Szpera, the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of nearly all children under the age of 10 being deported from the Łódź Ghetto in September 1942 and transported to the Camp for Children and Teenagers on Przemysłowa Street, established by the Germans in 1942 near the ghetto.<sup>33</sup> Students also had the opportunity to get to know about the history and fate of the city's Roma children, through the example of the so-called Gypsy camp created by the Germans

---

<sup>32</sup> *Zofia Libich. Sprawiedliwa Wśród Narodów Świata. Wspomnienia Hany Swirski*, Łódź, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Polen-Jugendverwahrlager der Sicherheitspolizei in Litzmannstadt, a camp established by the Germans in December 1942 within the area of the ghetto, was intended for Polish children and teenagers aged 6–12, but the youngest prisoners were 2–3 years old. The camp existed until January 1945.

in November 1941 and liquidated in January 1942 by transporting the inmates to the Kulmhof extermination centre (in the village of Chełmno-on-the-Ner). Of the Roma and Sinti brought at that time from Burgenland to Litzmannstadt, more than half were children.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, students learned about other tragic events from the history of the Second World War, among others the fate of Jewish children from Janusz Korczak's orphanage, who in August 1942 were taken together with their guardian from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka. The students of Łódź middle and secondary schools prepared *Report 2017: Children*, another mini-magazine for publication, in which they recalled the historical events, but also analysed the current situation of children both in Poland and in places currently suffering the reality of war, i.e. Syria and Ukraine.<sup>35</sup> These were accompanied by an exhibition prepared in co-operation with the Helsinki Foundation for Children's Rights, the Children's Ombudsman and UNICEF and was entitled 'Not Children, but Humans: Children's Rights are Human Rights'.<sup>36</sup> The exhibition was inaugurated on 1 June 2017 within the Dialogue Centre and special works to be displayed – artistic interpretations of the chosen Children's Rights – were designed by students of the Władysław Strzemiński Academy of Fine Arts (ASP) in Łódź. The exhibition design was also developed by a young artist, ASP graduate Weronika Hryniewicz. The exposition finale took place on 20 November 2017, on Polish National Children's Rights Day, but it enjoyed such good reviews that a mobile version was prepared. The exhibition, now in Polish, English and French, is currently travelling between different schools.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Among 5, 007 Roma (Gypsies) brought to Litzmannstadt between 5–9 November 1941 there were 2, 689 children. See J. Baranowski, *Zigeunerlager in Litzmannstadt 1941–1942*, Łódź, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> *Report 2017: Children*, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/ebooks/dzieci2/> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>36</sup> Permanent exhibition: "Not Children, but Humans. Children's Rights are Human Rights", <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/wystawy/czasowe/1848-nie-ma-dzieci-sa-ludzie-prawa-dziecka-to-prawa-czlowieka> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>37</sup> On the initiative of the French Institute, the French version was prepared by students of bilingual classes from schools all over Poland and is now presented at schools teaching the French language in different cities. Together with learning the language, students discover the history of World War Two, as well as present cases of human rights violations.

While creating the children's rights project devoted to children's rights, the young people involved realised the relevance of discussing the ongoing armed conflict in Syria, the fate of refugees they heard about from the media, and the situation of children deprived of access to education. They became interested in Malala Yousafzai, the youngest Noble Prize winner, a Pakistani girl fighting for women's rights to education.<sup>38</sup> They also learnt about the life of Alina Margolis-Edelman, a paediatrician providing aid to children in all corners of the globe as a Doctor of the World.<sup>39</sup> In Poland, she was involved in the establishment of Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje (*Nobody's Children Foundation*, now known as Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę, *The Empowering Children Foundation*). These stories were described in three issues of the *Report* (the undertaking subsidized by the Polish History Museum in Warsaw within the framework of the aforementioned project 'The Patriotism of Tomorrow').<sup>40</sup>

In 2018, in connection with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Polish independence, the Dialogue Centre's educational activities were concentrated around talks on patriotism. During classes organised for children, teenagers and adults, the former history of the independent and multicultural city of Łódź was explored. 'The Patriotism of Tomorrow' assumed the creation of an online TV channel under the name Kurier TV. Six episodes were recorded, which are available in their entirety on the Dialogue Centre YouTube channel. In them, teenagers share their

---

<sup>38</sup> Malala Yousafzai (1997-), activist and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate. After campaigning for female education in her native Pakistan, in 2012 Malala was shot in the head by the Taliban but miraculously survived. She moved to England for specialist treatment and now resides there, continuing her activism whilst studying.

<sup>39</sup> Alina Margolis-Edelman (1922–2008), pediatrician, social activist. In France from 1970. She co-created the Doctors of the World organization. She worked on ships' hospitals, picking up refugees from the Communist Vietnam on the sea (so-called 'boat people'); she helped the ill in Salvador, Chad and Afghanistan. In 1991, she established Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje (Nobody's Children Foundation) in Poland, involved in preventing violence towards children.

<sup>40</sup> Report 2017: Children, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/dzialalnosc-centrum-dialogu/1593-raport-2017-dzieci> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

vision of politics and patriotism.<sup>41</sup> In particular, in the context of ardent debate in Poland around historical policy, discussing how their peers, teachers or artists also define patriotism constituted an interesting and self-developing experience for young Club members.

The year 2019 is in great part dedicated to Marek Edelman, due to the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Dialogue Centre's patron as well as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.<sup>42</sup> Łódź City Council have announced the year 2019 to be Marek Edelman's Year. Young people, supervised by Dialogue Centre educators, are learning about the life of Marek Edelman, who was a witness to and participant of many important events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marek Edelman's values and beliefs, together with his words and wise reflections, serve as a starting point for Dialogue Centre staff discussing with young people both history (such as the Shoah, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the birth of totalitarianisms, the Communist era of the Polish People's Republic, Polish and Jewish relationships, together with many other topics), the future and moral attitudes. "When you look at evil and turn your head away or do not help when you can, then you share the responsibility. Because turning your head away helps those who commit evil," Marek Edelman said. This sentence contains the most important elements of education at the Dialogue Centre during Marek Edelman's Year, but also within the entire period of activity of the institution. This also rings true from his words from his last book published in co-operation with Paula Sawicka, *I była miłość w getcie* (*And There was Love in the Ghetto*): "At schools, kindergartens and universities, we need to teach that evil is evil, that hatred is evil and that love is our duty. We need to

<sup>41</sup> Kurier TV, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/projekty-edukacyjne/klub-kuriera/klub-kuriera-2018-kurier-tv> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>42</sup> Marek Edelman (1919–2009), political and social activist. He fought during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and then in the Warsaw Uprising. After the war he settled in Łódź. He finished his medical studies and worked as a cardiologist. In the 1970s he got involved in oppositional activity. He co-created Workers' Defence Committee KOR and Solidarity, took part in the Round Table Talks. In the 1990s he referred to the important events of those times. Author and co-author of several books, including *Getto walczy* (*The Ghetto is Fighting*) and *I była miłość w getcie* (*And There was Love in the Ghetto*).

fight evil so that its perpetrators understand that there will be no mercy for them.”<sup>43</sup>

## 2. Understanding the present

Apart from learning about the past, the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre’s objective is also to refer to the most important subjects concerning the present. Understanding the mechanisms governing current reality may constitute an even more difficult task within the education process than studying history. In 2015, the cycle ‘Translating the World’ was inaugurated at the Dialogue Centre with a lecture by Professor Władysław Bartoszewski. The cycle treats and analyses current issues all over the world. The origin of what was happening at that time in Ukraine was presented by a political scientist from the University of Łódź, Professor Przemysław Żurawski vel Grajewski. The Head of the Department of Middle East and North Africa at the University of Łódź, Professor Marek Dziekan, spoke about the Quran as well as about selected aspects of Muslim law and the connections between Islamic and Western civilizations. Konstanty Gebert referred to the situation in Israel before and after the elections, as well as to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the period when serious conflicts were breaking out in the Middle East. The meetings garnered great public interest. They made it possible for all those interested to develop their knowledge, and showed some listeners that explanations for a lot of modern conflicts can be found back in the past. They also learnt that history – unfortunately – repeats itself. It was drastically depicted by the migration crisis, the most severe manifestation of which took place in the summer and autumn of 2015, resulting in a wave of hatred, racism, xenophobia and chauvinism in Europe, expressed in particular by antipathy and aggression towards refugees, mainly Muslims.

The situation in Europe, as well as in Poland, the language of hatred in the media and on the Internet, aggressive attitudes towards foreigners

---

<sup>43</sup> M. Edelman and Paula Sawicka, *I była miłość w getcie*, Wydawnictwa Czarne, 2015, p. 21.

living in Poland and foreign students in Łódź – all of these factors forced the Dialogue Centre to look at the educational system as well as deeply reflect on how to talk about difficult and pressing problems arousing vivid emotions. How to talk not only with those who are already convinced by the sentiment of such dialogue, but how to reach the wider public with important humanistic messages and education.

In the academic year 2015/2016, the Dialogue Centre, in co-operation with the University of Łódź, prepared an all-year programme, ‘The World of Islam: Roots, Development, Stereotypes’, which was devoted to multiple aspects (for example, Islamic culture and art) but in particular presented in a knowledge-based way the genesis of territorial and political order of the Middle East; discussed the course and consequences of the Arab Spring; presented the birth of the Islamic State and the international consequences of recent events, including the huge wave of refugees in Europe. The aim was clearly specified: to present the issue and answer the audience’s questions in an academic, objective way. Dialogue Centre staff did not possess expert knowledge which could enable them to refer to these difficult topics, but they received support from the Department of Middle East and North Africa at the University of Łódź. In order for the subject to reach schools, ‘EduAkcja’ was prepared – special classes developed to react to current events entitled ‘The Pyramid of Hatred: How are Totalitarianisms Born?’ constituting an attempt to discuss current events and show their historical context. “The classes prepared by us are based on discussion and analysis of the five-level prejudice scale established by Gordon Allport, American psychologist. The work on the ‘Pyramid of Hatred’ itself will make it possible to follow, step by step, how the big totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – fascism, Nazism and Communism – were born”, one can read in the materials addressed to teachers. During the classes students discussed how dangerous stigmatization and social exclusion are as phenomena, as well as what the consequences of such actions and behaviours can be and to what tragedies they can lead.

Next, a series of classes devoted to the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century addressed to secondary school students were delivered, during which educators from the Dialogue Centre discussed current events with young people. For many months, the most expected and desired topic, which constituted the answer to the queries and requests of teachers and directors from the schools in Łódź, was the migration crisis. “Within the last 25 years of liberty in Poland, few subjects ignited the Poles to the same extent as the events connected with the last migration crisis. This problem is vividly discussed in families, schools and online forums. Unfortunately, narration referring to this issue is full of ignorance, insufficient knowledge and stereotypes. The aim of the Marek Edelman Dialogue Centre is to make the origins of the events that we are encountering today closer to us”, stated the announcement of classes prepared by the Centre.<sup>44</sup>

Due to huge interest in the media throughout Poland, the topic aroused vivid emotions. But at the same time, students were also ready to hear the facts dating back to the 1920s and 1930s, which led to the outbreak of the Second World War and to the murder of millions of people, including the establishment of the death machine of which the extermination camps were a part. It was also an opportunity to show that genocide repeats, and so do the mechanisms which lead to it. Unfortunately, negative propaganda around Muslim refugees encourages young people to manifest more and more violent and aggressive views and behaviours, to which we should react immediately.

Direct reports from the civil war in Syria, which we have been witnessing in recent years, make us ask ourselves (and our students) questions concerning responsibility for armed conflicts currently happening in the world. This, in turn, enables us to talk about the past and the world's indifference towards the Shoah during World War Two.

---

<sup>44</sup> Education/Relation, “Classes for students”, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/dzialalnosc-centrum-dialogu/1459-edukacja-reakcja--zajecia-dla-uczniow> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

### 3. Building a better future around us

The history of the Second World War, in particular the history of the Łódź Ghetto, of Poland, of the city of Łódź or even of the district within which the Dialogue Centre is situated, makes it possible to talk both about the future and important current subjects: the national as well as local ones, which shape the community and identity of the place.

The Dialogue Centre is located in the Bałuty district, in the section which used to be called Bałuty Kolonia. 2015 marked 100 years since the incorporation of Bałuty into the city of Łódź, and so the Dialogue Centre decided to devote more attention to this city district, which in the consciousness of citizens is still considered “the poorest” and “the most dangerous” part of Łódź. The saying “Steer clear of a Bałuty man” is known and repeated by all Łódź citizens, but it has already gone beyond the borders of the city and even the country. Centre staff, together with local citizens, began to wonder what the district of Bałuty really represents. After the first few weeks, it was already apparent that nearly everybody talking about the biggest of Łódź’s districts had something totally different in mind. So they began asking themselves questions: Where are the limits of Bałuty? What does this district of the city of Łódź represent? Is this area somehow specific? What do its inhabitants have in common? Thus, an all-year project, ‘The City of Bałuty’, was prepared, consisting of lectures, guided tours, exhibitions and concerts.

Among those invited to co-operate were historians, artists, photographers, ethnologists and journalists, who helped to motivate citizens. The Centre initiated a number of photography and art workshops, together with those devoted to journalism and ethnography, during which the inhabitants of Bałuty began to tell their stories. Inspiration also came from literature, old newspapers and archival reports, as well as from journals and accounts from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the interwar period, the ghetto’s operation and the Polish People’s Republic Communist era.

Bałuty is undoubtedly the district of Łódź which has received the greatest attention in literature, not only in memoirs but also in fiction. Images of the district can be found, among others, in *Bracia Aszkenazy*

(*The Brothers Ashkenazi*), a novel written by Israel Joshua Singer in Yiddish right before World War Two.<sup>45</sup> Before the war, Israel Rabon wrote his novel *Bałuty*<sup>46</sup> in the same language. As late as 2016, the book was translated and published by the University of Łódź. Probably the most famous story about the Bałuty district, however, is the life of Blind Max, a Jew and gangster from Bałuty, written down by Arnold Mostowicz in his work *Ballada o Ślepym Maksie* (*The Ballad of Blind Max*), but also retold by other writers both before and after.<sup>47</sup> *Ciotka Ester* (*Aunt Esther*) by Arie Aksztajn is another important Bałuty book, in which the author presents the colourful and magical but also brutal reality of his childhood in the inter-war Bałuty district.<sup>48</sup> The book was written in Hebrew and published in Polish in the 1990s. During the commemorations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of Bałuty into the city of Łódź, the Dialogue Centre reminded Bałuty inhabitants of some of these titles with stories presented by actors. In 2015, the Centre published the first volume of the novel *Drzewo życia* (*The Tree of Life*), an important book which was made available in Polish in its entirety by 2018.<sup>49</sup> Yet the most important thing was reaching the collective memory of Łódź's citizens. It turned out that a lot of inhabitants of the old part of the Bałuty district have been connected with the area for generations.

In 2015, while co-operating with the citizens of the Bałuty district, the Dialogue Centre published the *Bałuty Dictionary*, forming a specific

<sup>45</sup> I. J. Singer, *Bracia Aszkenazy*, translated by Maria Krych, Wrocław, 1998.

<sup>46</sup> J. Rabon, *Bałuty. Powieść o przedmieściu*, translated by Natalia Krynicka, Izabela Olejnik, Łódź, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> A. Mostowicz, *Ballada o Ślepym Maksie*, Łódź, 1998.

<sup>48</sup> A. Aksztajn, *Ciotka Ester*, translated from Hebrew by Sara Bande-Celnik, Futura Press, Łódź, 1996.

<sup>49</sup> Ch. Rosenfarb, *Drzewo życia*, vol. 1–3, translated from Yiddish by Joanna Lisek, Magda Ruta, Natalia Krynicka, Marek Tuszewicki, Łódź, 2015–2017. The novel *The Tree of Life* was written by Chava Rosenfarb, originally in Yiddish and then translated into Polish. There is also a translation into English, created by the author herself and her daughter Glodie Morgentaler.

glossary of Bałuty words and places.<sup>50</sup> In order to create the publication, four rounds of workshops were organised, during which volunteers (students and senior participants) talked with district citizens, discovering the specific character of this place. They worked on the collected material together with linguists and ethnologists. The *Bałuty Dictionary* was very warmly welcomed by the citizens of Łódź and even received a nomination for the ‘Energia Kultury’ award by *Gazeta Wyborcza* and Toya TV. Its paper version sold like hot cakes and was a desired Christmas gift in 2015. Its electronic version is available online and a sign language version was also prepared.<sup>51</sup> Annual events from ‘The City of Bałuty’ cycle were accompanied by different guided tours of the district, lectures and workshops, as well as a family picnic entitled ‘Bigiel on Żytnia Street,’ in which more than 2,000 people participated. Both Łódź hipsters and native Bałuty inhabitants enjoyed their time, accompanied by hip-hop music and Bałuty tango.<sup>52</sup> In the year that followed, the Dialogue Centre invited Łódź citizens to Młynarska Street to discover another fragment of the forgotten and neglected district, and in 2017, *Bałuty Dictionary #2* was published, strongly requested by citizens, but this time, its key comprised of the streets, squares, small shops and people, including street patrons.<sup>53</sup> The citizens of Bałuty are constantly looking for their identity, and the Dialogue Centre assists them in their search.

As a place marked by the trauma of the Second World War, the district of Bałuty has become the inspiration for numerous international projects realized in co-operation with the Dialogue Centre. In 2015, the project ‘Rethinking Memory Culture’ was inaugurated, within the framework of

<sup>50</sup> *Bałucki Słownik*, Łódź, 2015. “The Bałuty Dictionary” was developed within the framework of the programme “Mother Tongue, Add to Favourites” financed by the National Culture Centre.

<sup>51</sup> *Bałucki Słownik*, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/ebooks/balucki/mobile/index.html#p=1> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>52</sup> K. Sakosik, „Bigiel na Żytniej. Impreza jak za dawnych lat...”, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Łódź edition, last modified 11.09.2015. <http://lodz.wyborcza.pl/lodz/1,35135,18786711.centrum-dialogu-zaprasza-na-niedzielnny-bigiel-na-zytniej.html> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>53</sup> Trailer of the Bałuty Dictionary #2 on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-Yh\\_L7Dd9\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-Yh_L7Dd9_U) [accessed: 30.04.2019].

which students of visual arts, journalism, culture studies, film and animation from Poland, Germany and Norway reflected on how to share the memory of the Łódź Ghetto with future generations and how to get the local community involved in these activities.<sup>54</sup> Annual workshops will result in students' artistic projects being presented during the 'Memory Dialogues' exhibition on the occasion of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liquidation of the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, in the autumn of 2019. Furthermore, subsequent works prepared by lecturers have been created step by step, for example 'This Is a Human Being' by Hilde Kramer, a visual artist from Norway.<sup>55</sup> In 2017, her exhibition 'Remembrance through Stones' was inaugurated, constituting the next stage of the project.<sup>56</sup>

Norwegian artist Geir Goosen began work on his project 'This is Not a Ghetto, It's My Home' in 2017. He intends to work through the trauma of the ghetto together with district citizens. An attempt to address this complicated issue was also highlighted in an earlier project by Katarzyna Tośta, 'The Children of Bałuty – Murals of Memory,' initiated in 2012 by the Na Co Dzień i od Święta association, with the Dialogue Centre its knowledge-related partner from the very beginning. Through seven artworks on the walls of Bałuty houses, the story of Polish, Jewish and Roma children who found themselves in the Łódź Ghetto, the Gypsy camp or the camp on Przemysłowa Street was told in an innovative way. 'The project is aimed at recalling this tragic history by presenting authentic examples of children from the Bałuty district under German occupation, referring to the few archival photographs', one can read on the website of the association.<sup>57</sup> Life-size images of the children were created by Piotr Saul in

---

<sup>54</sup> Institutions involved in the project include universities in Volda and Bergen in Norway, Lemgo and Berlin in Germany, as well as from Łódź: The Academy of Fine Arts and the University of Łódź.

<sup>55</sup> This is a Human Being, <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/333350/333351> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>56</sup> Remembrance through Stones, <https://www.centrumdialogu.com/dzialalnosc-centrum-dialogu/1646-sluchajac-kamieni-warsztaty> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

<sup>57</sup> "The Children of Bałuty – Murals of Memory", <http://dziecibalut.pl/#/news> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

co-operation with Damian Idzikowski. They were placed on the walls of tenement houses, blocks of flats and schools. Bałuty's inhabitants accepted them as part of the district's landscape; they have not been covered in graffiti or vandalized. The majority of them are anonymous people copied from archival photographs. Only some of them tell the story of specific individuals: for example, ghetto poets such as Abramek Cytryn and Abramek Koplłowicz, or Genowefa Wójcik, an inmate of the camp for Polish children on Przemysłowa Street.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, all of them are tightly connected with Bałuty's history and space. In 2017, the Dialogue Centre placed the portraits of two girls on the wall of 24 Franciszkańska Street. These two girls were friends from the ghetto: Salomea Kape, now a doctor who lives in New York, and Stella Szafir, who perished during the Wielka Szpera.<sup>59</sup> Their story was also the source of inspiration for other activities, among others guided tour of the ghetto following the footsteps of the school friends as well as the exhibition at the Dialogue Centre entitled 'We are Eternal Trees', with Salomea Kape as one of its characters. Tree number 425 at the Survivors' Park belongs to her.

### Final reflections

There is no doubt that simply teaching history is not enough, and education is not the remedy which could save humanity from the recurring evil

<sup>58</sup> Abram Cytryn (1927–1944), Łódź Ghetto poet who died in Auschwitz. His sister, Luce Cytryn-Bialer, found his poems after the war and published them in Polish, French and English. A note belonging to Abram Koplłowicz (1930–1944) containing his work was found by his father after returning from the camps. A selection of Abramek's poems was published in Polish in 1993, but his poetry, in particular the poem 'Dream,' is known in many different languages. Genowefa Wójcik was an inmate of the camp for Polish children on Przemysłowa Street in Łódź.

<sup>59</sup> Salomea Kape, née Herszenberg (1926-) survived the war, finished her medical studies in Łódź and in 1957 emigrated through Israel to the USA. She wrote a book about her memories, 'Kocham twą urodę złą najdroższe miasto na świecie. Wspomnienia z getta łódzkiego' (I Love your Evil Beauty, Most Precious City in the World: Memories from the Łódź Ghetto) (2014). Stella Szafir was a school friend of Kape's, taken from the ghetto during the so-called Wielka Szpera murder action and killed in Chełmno-on-the-Ner. Article about Salomea Kape, <https://www.newsweek.pl/styl-zycia/salomea-kape-wciaz-nie-moge-tego-zapomniec/8v9zjmp> [accessed: 30.04.2019].

of wars, pogroms and mistakes from the past. It is not enough to know what happened in the past, but it is necessary, and should be passed onto subsequent generations through education both at school and at home. Yet it should be remembered that while talking about traumatic events from the past, it is not crucial to discuss numbers, dates and names, but rather to teach sensitivity, empathy and responsibility. To highlight the mechanisms which are repeating, promote reflections on our immediate neighbourhoods, and create interest and motivation in actively opposing evil. Let us act. This action may even consist in a simple discussion, started by the question: What do the stones that we step on every day tell us?

**PART 2:**

**Prospects**

MAREK KUCIA AND KATARZYNA STEC

# Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust from the Perspective of Social Research

## Introduction

Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust is a domain of practical activities undertaken by teachers; methodologists and designers of educational programmes; museum workers and methodologists of guided tours; and guides of memorial sites and museums. It is also a subject of scientific reflection in the field of pedagogy. As an area of teaching and education, it pursues various objectives and envisages various effects, principally related to the development of knowledge about the past; knowledge of facts and the causes of processes and events, and occasionally, above all, the shaping of the attitudes and values of its recipients, such as tolerance and openness, and the rejection of discrimination, anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia. The primary recipients of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust are schoolchildren, and those who conduct this education are mainly teachers and guides. The recipients do, however, also include other groups, such as adults, families, students, selected social and professional categories like the clergy, police officers, prison staff, soldiers, and – last but not least – people with special educational needs. An important feature of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, as well as education in general, is that it is conducted in changing cultural, social, and political conditions that strongly affect its objectives, content, form and results.

The issues of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust – in particular its goals and effects, as well as its determinants, which are

the subject of practical activities of educators and theoretical reflections of teachers – have also become the subject of empirical research. This is conducted by representatives of various disciplines within the social sciences, especially psychology and sociology, as well as their practitioners. In Poland, such studies have been conducted since the 1960s, but their development has been ongoing since the 1990s. Most studies have mainly focused on Polish recipients, although there have also been studies involving foreigners. One of the leading problems undertaken both in pedagogical reflection and educational practice, as well as in empirical research, was and is the question of the effectiveness of teaching about Auschwitz and the Holocaust as a way of shaping the attitudes and values of young people through the transfer of knowledge. In this article, we discuss this issue based on the results and methodological assumptions of the most important social research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust that has been carried out in Poland, among Polish recipients of this education, since the 1990s. We focused our analysis and summary on research carried out among young recipients of the educational process, mainly schoolchildren, and omitted research among other recipients, including teachers and guides.

We classified the research of interest to us into three groups. First, we conducted research on people visiting memorial sites and museums established on the grounds of the former concentration and extermination camps, particularly KL Auschwitz. Here, we focused on the research (or sections of the research) that concerned Polish school students – participants of the so-called standard visit, which may be considered a single educational event. Secondly, we analysed research carried out among Polish school students who are recipients of educational programmes, museum lessons or thematic workshops on Auschwitz and/or the Holocaust conducted off school grounds, at memorial sites and the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek Museums, organised by various entities. Thirdly, we also took into account selected research conducted in Polish schools among students – recipients of formal education. We did not, however, take into consideration research on

the broader subject of the memory of World War Two. We also did not take into account research that would have illustrated factors of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust other than places of remembrance, museums and schools, such as family, the media, religion, politics and culture, even though they have a significant impact on the effectiveness of this education. In our analyses, we focused on who, when, where, among what groups, how, and what the research was about. We focused on the results of these studies. We ignored the methodological criticism of individual studies (comparisons of the questions asked, amongst others), but instead dealt with the methodological challenges of research on Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

Before we present the selected research, we would like to point out that it was not always explicitly aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of the process of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in terms of improving the level of knowledge or shaping the attitudes of its participants. They often addressed the broader background and conditions of educational activities, taking into account the unintended and even undesired effects of these activities. The research mentioned here did not always contain direct recommendations on how to effectively teach about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. Furthermore, there were only a few strictly evaluative studies among them, consisting in the assessment of the degree of accomplishment of objectives and effects assumed within the framework of particular educational programmes. The majority focused on a single, often episodic, educational experience. Nevertheless, the included studies are certainly some of the most important sources of knowledge on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in Poland, and in particular, its effects on the transfer of knowledge and shaping of attitudes.

In the following three excerpts of this article, we present selected research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust carried out in Poland among Polish recipients. In the subsequent sections, we summarise and discuss the results of these research works and formulate recommendations for future research work.

## **Studies carried out among visitors to memorial sites and museums, especially school students**

Among Polish empirical studies of visitors to memorial sites and museums established in the post-camp areas, it is worth making a preliminary reference to surveys conducted by the **historian Jolanta Adamska in 1994**.<sup>60</sup> These surveys aimed to assess the impact of the content presented by memorial sites and museums in Oświęcim, Majdanek, Sztutowo and Rogoźnica on young people aged 14–19 years. The author of the survey attempted to determine the effects of a visit to the museums mentioned above, even though the analysis focused on the perception of these places and not on the knowledge of basic facts about the history of the former camps. Adamska's survey is the first Polish empirical research study on the importance of memorial sites and museums. Regrettably, the results of these studies were never published extensively and, therefore, cannot be thoroughly evaluated in terms of the value of the findings, as well as the adequacy and correctness of the adopted methodology.

Studies of Polish school youth visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum by **sociologist Marek Kucia, conducted in the years 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2005**, deserve particular attention.<sup>61</sup> These studies were part of broader research on the social awareness of KL Auschwitz in Poland. The most comprehensive study was carried out in 2000 using the repetitive survey method through the auditorium survey

---

<sup>60</sup> J. Adamska, „Muzea – miejsca pamięci w oczach młodzieży. Omówienie rezultatów ankietyzacji przeprowadzonej w 1994 r. przez Radę Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa”, *Przeszłość i pamięć*, 1(2) (1997), pp. 8–13.

<sup>61</sup> M. Kucia, *Opinie polskich uczniów na temat obozu Auschwitz A.D. 2000*. vol. 1 Summary report, vol. 2 Aggregated survey results, vol. 3 Table of annexes, vol. 4 Records of responses to open-ended questions, vol. 5 Records of group interviews, Kraków 2000 [typescript]; M. Kucia, „KL Auschwitz w świadomości społecznej współczesnych Polaków”, *Pro Memoria*, 15 (2001), pp. 31–44; M. Kucia, „Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów”, *Pro Memoria*, 16 (2001), pp. 17–26; M. Kucia, „Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w opinii zwiedzających”, *Pro Memoria*, 20 (2003), pp. 49–54; M. Kucia, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny. Historia, współczesność i świadomość społeczna KL Auschwitz w Polsce*, Kraków, 2005; M. Kucia, *KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów. Komunikat z badań*, Kraków, 2005 [typescript]; M. Kucia, „KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów”, *Pro Memoria*, 27 (2007), pp. 99–108.

technique, immediately before visiting the Memorial site and Museum (N=408) and a week or two after visiting (N=341). The questionnaires were supplemented with focused group interviews. The largest questionnaire survey was conducted in 2005 (N=977). The research concerned, among other things, knowledge of the basic facts about Auschwitz (its history, structure, function, and number and identity of victims); perception of the meaning and conviction of the importance of Auschwitz; perception of its symbolism; attitudes towards Jews and anti-Semitism; and the impact of a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. Kucia's research is one of the most comprehensive sources of information on the perception of Auschwitz – the camp, Memorial site and Museum – by Polish school youth.

The continuation and development of Kucia's research was undertaken **in the years 2008–2010 by the sociologist Katarzyna Stec** among Polish school youth aged 13–21 years, visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, the State Museum at Majdanek and the Museum of Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka.<sup>62</sup> The most important stage of the project was quantitative research based on the repetitive survey method using the auditorium survey technique, conducted before the visit (N=1,632) and after the visit (N=780) in the places mentioned above. The main goal was to present the results of the visit to two selected Memorial sites and Museums – Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek – as well as a comparative reference to the perception of the Memorial site and Museum in Treblinka. The survey was complemented by interviews with teachers and observations of young people during visits to the sites mentioned above, with elements of visual sociology and quality workshops among selected groups of previously surveyed young people conducted about three months after the visit.

<sup>62</sup> K. Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci utworzonych na terenach byłych obozów koncentracyjnych i zagłady z perspektywy współczesnego młodego człowieka”, in: M. Kucia (ed.), *Antysemityzm, Holokaust, Auschwitz w badaniach społecznych*, Kraków, 2011, pp. 37–54; K. Stec, „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci dla współczesnego młodego człowieka – doświadczenie edukacyjne czy turystyczne”, in: P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz i Holokaust. Edukacja w szkole i w miejscu pamięci*, Oświęcim, 2014, pp. 287–297.

Another empirical study carried out on smaller research samples, which to some extent concerned issues related to the impact of a visit to memorial sites, but focused on a specific topic, was a study by the **museologist Agnieszka Praga** among Polish youth (N=58) and German youth (N=50), conducted immediately after their visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum **from the end of April to the beginning of May 2013**.<sup>63</sup> The author used the questionnaire technique with closed and open questions. These studies were mainly concerned with analysis of the effect of the earlier impressions of young people, formed during socialising, on the perception of the visited site. The aim was to examine whether individual memories acquired in the socialisation process, with family and other social contexts, are relevant to school education to a greater or lesser degree and, above all, to the young person's experience of an authentic memorial site.<sup>64</sup>

In turn, the main objective of the quantitative longitudinal study designed and conducted by **social psychologists Michał Bilewicz and Adrian Dominik Wójcik in 2012** was to assess the scale of secondary traumatisatisation among visitors to such places – the appearance of symptoms of so-called secondary post-traumatic stress disorders due to indirect exposure to trauma, resulting from visiting a memorial site.<sup>65</sup> The research was conducted using a standardised questionnaire completed by Polish youth, all participants of a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum organised by the Jewish Centre in Oświęcim (N=686), in three-time frames – one month before the visit, immediately after the visit, and one month after the visit.

Taking into account the state of Polish empirical research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in authentic memorial sites, it

---

<sup>63</sup> A. Praga, „Rola i znaczenie pamięci o KL Auschwitz-Birkenau w edukacji historycznej Polaków i Niemców. Konfrontacja pamięci indywidualnej z doświadczeniem miejsca”, *Załącznik Kulturoznawczy*, 1 (2014), pp. 541–660.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> M. Bilewicz and A. Wójcik, „A. D. 2018. Visiting Auschwitz: Evidence of secondary traumatization among high school students”, *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 88(3) (2018), pp. 328–334.

is also worth referring to the concept of dark tourism in the analysis of contemporary socio-cultural functions of these sites. The first in Poland to directly use the concept of dark tourism to analyse the significance of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum is the work edited by **geographer Jadwiga Berbeka**.<sup>66</sup> In this work, the author refers to the results of a survey she designed and **conducted in 2011** among domestic and foreign tourists after their visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (N=728). The aim of the research was primarily to analyse tourist behaviour, learn the motives of a visit to this place, the premises determining the visit and the sources of knowledge about the visited place.<sup>67</sup> However, the empirical research conducted under the supervision of Berbeka does not provide a deeper reflection on the perception of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. The author treated both the issues of motivation and the effects of the visit quite superficially and focused mainly on evaluation of tourist offers, including the available services and infrastructure at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum.

Also worthy of note among the few studies addressing the subject of thanatourism in Poland, in the context of visits to museums and memorial sites, are the works of the **geographer Sławoj Tanaś**, in which he refers to visits to museums and memorial sites created in post-camp areas in the context of distinguishing different types of dark tourism.<sup>68</sup> The works of this author are not based on social field studies generating induced data, but primarily on the analysis of existing data. As one of few studies in this area, however, it provides comprehensive knowledge about the phenomenon of thanatourism – from the importance of death in relation to existing cultural norms, through the development of space for so-called dark tourism, to the specifics of the participant's perception of this tourism.

<sup>66</sup> J. Berbeka (ed.), *Turystyka martyrologiczna w Polsce na przykładzie Państwowego Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau*, Kraków, 2012.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> S. Tanaś, *Przestrzeń turystyczna cmentarzy. Wstęp do tanatoturystyki*, Łódź, 2009; S. Tanaś, *Tanatoturystyka. Od przestrzeni śmierci do przestrzeni turystycznej*, Łódź, 2013.

### **Research conducted among young people - recipients of educational programmes about Auschwitz and the Holocaust undertaken outside school**

Another type of empirical research on the effects of educational activities on Auschwitz and the Holocaust is the analysis of the effectiveness of educational programmes on this subject conducted outside the school environment, usually by various non-governmental organisations dealing with the issue of education about the Holocaust or as an educational offer of memorial sites and museums.

Two sub-types can be identified in principle within this research type. Firstly, research is carried out using the methodology of evaluation studies, the aim of which is to assess the degree to which the objectives and effects of particular educational programmes have been achieved and to test the effectiveness of the offer in terms of acquired factual knowledge and the declared attitudes, beliefs and values of its participants. Secondly, besides the strictly evaluative research, the researchers also attempt to measure the general understood impact of programmes on their participants, without necessarily referring directly to the intended educational objectives of these programmes.

Among the examples of evaluation studies of specific educational programmes, the evaluations carried out by **the team led by social psychologist Michał Bilewicz** are noteworthy. They encompassed two educational programmes: 'Oświęcim Otherwise – Anti-Discrimination Workshops', a programme run by the Oświęcim Jewish Centre in 2011 and 'The School of Dialogue', a series of workshops conducted by the Forum for Dialogue Foundation since 2008.<sup>69</sup>

The evaluation studies of the 'Oświęcim Otherwise – Anti-Discrimination Workshops' programme were conducted longitudinally. Respondents completed the questionnaire one month before the workshops, directly after the workshops and one month after the workshops. The

---

<sup>69</sup> A. Wójcik and M. Bilewicz, *Oświęcim inaczej. Ewaluacja warsztatów antydyskryminacyjnych*, Centrum Badań nad Uprzedzeniami, Warszawa, 2012; M. Witkowska, A. Stefaniak, M. Bilewicz, „Stracone szanse? Wpływ polskiej edukacji o Zagładzie na postawy wobec Żydów”, *Psychologia Wychowawcza*, 5 (2014), pp. 147–159.

goal was to see if participation in the workshops had a long-term effect on the change of attitudes of the participants (N=860 out of 27 different workshop groups). Conversely, evaluation studies of ‘The School of Dialogue’ programme were conducted twice – in 2012 (N=437) and 2013 (N=486). They involved assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in terms of the correctness and extent of the knowledge acquired and the impact on shaping the attitudes and convictions of participants.

The measurement of effects or broadly understood impact of educational programmes on its participants is becoming an integral part of such projects, although these studies are not always strictly evaluation-based. Consequently, we can distinguish the second sub-type of empirical research – mainly due to its methodological assumptions – which addresses the issue of the impact of educational programmes on its participants, taking into consideration factors that could differentiate such impact.

An example of the second sub-type is research conducted by the **linguist and pedagogue Grzegorz Żuk in the years 2012–2013** among the participants of a lesson on museums conducted by the educators of the State Museum at Majdanek (N=261, aged 15–18).<sup>70</sup> The author of the survey used a questionnaire with open questions to identify the subjective opinions of young people about one of the aspects of the Second World War – the activities of Nazi German concentration camps – and to learn about the attitudes of young participants in museum activities towards the camp events and phenomena. One of the goals of the study was to examine possible differences in perceptions of the reality of the concentration camp by women and men. The researcher assumed that the same historical material assimilated by young people during their

---

<sup>70</sup> G. Żuk, „Refleksja w miejscu pamięci. Badania empiryczne wśród uczestników lekcji muzealnych w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Edukacja pozaszkolna”, in: W. Wysok (ed.), *Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku. Jak przygotować, przeprowadzić i podsumować zajęcia dla uczniów*, Lublin, 2014, pp. 103–109.

stay in the Museum might lead to different reflections, presumably due to the gender of the respondents.<sup>71</sup>

Another example of this research sub-type is the questionnaire survey conducted following the completion of participation in educational programmes carried out by the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim (IYMC). One such notable survey was conducted by the **political scientist and educator Alicja Bartuś** on the memory of Auschwitz among the youth of Lesser Poland's secondary schools (N=357), participants in the project 'Małopolska Pamięta' (Lesser Poland Remembers), conducted in the spring of 2016.<sup>72</sup> The educational programme included a two-day visit to the Museum, participation in workshops and sightseeing tours of the town and synagogue, among other things. The research was conducted after completion of the programme and consisted mainly of a questionnaire survey and group discussion on general reflections regarding participation in the programme.

Subsequent studies include research by **Marta Berecka and Tomasz Kobyłański**, employees of the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The research was conducted among the participants of the project 'Auschwitz and the Perception of the Contemporary World,' of which the first edition was held in the autumn of 2016.<sup>73</sup> The project was addressed to students of Lesser Poland and Silesian middle and secondary schools. The project was implemented in stages: an inaugural conference, preparation of young people at school, a study visit to the Memorial site and Museum, and a competition entry. The study visits and the survey were conducted directly after the visit and involved 24 groups of young people from middle and upper secondary schools (N=486).

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> A. Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci Auschwitz w świetle ankiet przeprowadzonych wśród małopolskich uczniów w 2016 roku”, in: A. Bartuś (ed.), *Dzieci wojny*, Oświęcim, 2016, pp. 271–289.

<sup>73</sup> M. Berecka and T. Kobyłański, *Auschwitz a postrzeganie współczesnego świata. Opis projektu i wyniki badań ankietowych*, 2018 [materials provided by the authors].

## Research conducted among school youth - recipients of formal education conducted in schools

When considering the issue of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, it is impossible not to refer to research regarding teaching this issue within the framework of formal education in schools. In this context, the assessment of effectiveness and efficiency remains a rather marginal issue in empirical research. The research projects carried out so far have focused on the broadly understood impact of educational activities in schools and the substantive analysis of their content.

The most notable of these studies is **Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs'** extensive research conducted among Polish school youth (1998/1999) on the attitudes of students towards Jews and their historical knowledge about Jews.<sup>74</sup> The author also conducted longitudinal evaluation studies of a specific educational programme conducted in schools in Łomża between the years 2008–2010. At the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, the researcher conducted a survey in 95 high schools, which aimed to identify and explain the attitudes of young people towards other nationalities, cultures and religions, especially towards Jews. The study covered three categories of schools: comprehensive secondary schools, technical secondary schools (including specialised secondary schools) and basic vocational schools.

The issue of the effectiveness of educational activities conducted in schools was also addressed by a research team of **social psychologists composed of Marta Witkowska, Anna Stefaniak and Michał Bilewicz**, who carried out a questionnaire survey among 1,250 students from 20 secondary schools in Warsaw, aged 15–25, in 2013.<sup>75</sup> The funda-

<sup>74</sup> J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, "Attitudes of Young Poles towards Jews in Post-1989 Poland", *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 14(3) (2000), pp. 565–596; J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, *Me, Us, Them. Ethnic Prejudices and Alternative Methods of Education*, Kraków, 2003; J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, „Świadomość Holokaustu wśród młodzieży polskiej po zmianach systemowych 1989 roku”, in: F. Tych and M. Adamczyk-Garbowska (eds.), *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010*, Lublin, 2011, pp. 625–658.

<sup>75</sup> Witkowska et al., „*Stracone szanse?*”; M. Bilewicz, M. Witkowska, S. Stubig, M. Beneda, R. Imhoff, „How to Teach about the Holocaust? Psychological Obstacles in Historical Education in Poland and Germany”, in: C. Psaltis, M. Carretero, S. Čehajić-Clancy (eds.), *History Education and Conflict Transformation*, Cham, 2017, pp. 169–197.

mental question which researchers raised is to what extent the curricula conducted so far have accomplished the intended goal, i.e. have they reliably transferred knowledge and shaped the attitudes of the younger generation? The subject of the analyses covered three main substantive areas: the level of factual knowledge related to the history of the Holocaust, the assessment of young people in terms of the historical attitudes of Poles towards Jews and the declaration of their attitudes towards Jews.

In other studies, conducted by the same team a year later, the researchers attempted to identify the level of knowledge and attitudes towards Jews among young people from small towns and cities.<sup>76</sup> The research covered 700 secondary school students from 15 cities. In addition to the issues of knowledge and attitudes of the surveyed group of young people, the research also referred to sources from which young people acquire knowledge and based on which they develop their views and attitudes. The role of formal education in schools was also discussed in this context.

One of few research projects that primarily relied on a qualitative methodology to obtain answers regarding the specific impact of knowledge gained during formal education in schools on shaping the attitudes and imaginations of young people was a study conducted under the direction of **Magdalena Gross in the years 2010–2013**.<sup>77</sup> In the course of her three-year study, the author conducted qualitative research among 188 students of public schools in Poland using visual material (popular and recognisable war photographs). The research aimed to answer the question of how young people perceive the role of Jews, Germans, Russians and Poles in the context of events related to World War Two and to what extent they correspond to general social and academic views or scientifically acknowledged narratives.

---

<sup>76</sup> M. Witkowska and M. Bilewicz, „Czy prawda nas wyzwoli? Przelamywanie oporu psychologicznego w przyjmowaniu wiedzy o Zagładzie”, *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały*, 10 (2014), pp. 803–822.

<sup>77</sup> M. H. Gross, “Struggling to deal with the difficult past: Polish students confront the Holocaust”, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 46(4) (2014), pp. 441–463.

This analysed collection of empirical research should also be supplemented with analyses and research works, which, have not been conducted strictly based on the results of empirical research, but initiate a debate on the effectiveness of education about the Holocaust, mainly in the context of assumptions of the education of remembrance. Long-term analysis of education about the Holocaust, primarily implemented outside the school context, has thus far been led by a team of researchers and practitioners from the State Museum at Majdanek. The issues of the effectiveness of this education, its conditions and proposed effects are discussed in the works of **Tomasz Kranz and Wiesław Wysok**, amongst others.<sup>78</sup> One of the results of their reflections and analyses is, among others, the typology of the effects of the educational visit to a museum of remembrance or a set of recommendations for methodologically optimal teaching about the Holocaust in an extracurricular environment.

## The results of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust

### Acquisition of knowledge

As we pointed out earlier, education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust as a sphere of practical activities has various goals and assumes various effects, regarding knowledge of facts and shaping of attitudes and values. This first set of goals and educational results – acquiring knowledge about Auschwitz and other camps, the Holocaust and, more broadly, World War Two – is often regarded as a context condition, but is essential for achieving the goal of developing attitudes and values.

The empirical research we have analysed does not provide clear conclusions as to the effectiveness of educational activities aimed at acquiring knowledge about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. On the one hand, the results of part of the research prove that educational processes

<sup>78</sup> T. Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci*, Lublin, 2002; T. Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci. Zarys problematyki*, Lublin, 2009; W. Wysok, „Wokół problematyki uwarunkowań i efektów edukacji w muzeum upamiętnienia”, *Zeszyty Majdanka*, vol. 26 (2014), pp. 311–340.

have a positive impact on the increase of correctness and scope of the participants' factual knowledge. On the other hand, some studies point to only a small impact of these activities on changes in young people's impressions and level of knowledge before participation in various educational processes, regardless of whether we are referring to the effects of a standard visit to a memorial or the results of an extended educational programme.

Marek Kucia's quantitative and qualitative research provides conclusions on the positive educational effect of a visit to a museum and memorial site, based on the example of a standard visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The author states: 'A visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum contributes to a significant increase in the awareness of Polish youth about Auschwitz.'<sup>79</sup> The visit results in a change in the perception of the symbolism of Auschwitz and is also a great emotional experience. Among the effects of a visit to the Museum, the author mentions an increase in the sense of the importance of Auschwitz; awareness of facts related to the camp, especially in terms of the number and identity of victims; as well as the structure and function of the camp as a whole. In the light of his data, the visit also strengthens the diversity of perception regarding the purpose of the camp's existence, and young people indicate that the aim of the camp was 'to murder, exterminate, destroy, liquidate, exterminate Jews and others, including Poles and Gypsies'.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the sociologist emphasises that after the visit, the sense of the importance of Auschwitz grows among young people as well, and opinions about who created the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp become more detailed and less conventional.

Similarly, a questionnaire survey conducted by educators Marta Berecka and Tomasz Kobyłański among the participants of the project 'Auschwitz and the Perception of the Contemporary World' testify to the positive educational effect of a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau

---

<sup>79</sup> M. Kucia, „Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów”, *Pro Memoria*, 16 (2000), p. 26. See also Kucia, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny*, pp. 73–91.

<sup>80</sup> Kucia, *Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów*, p. 19.

Memorial and Museum in terms of broadening knowledge about the concentration camp and extermination centre.<sup>81</sup> It is worth noting that in this case, it is an extended study visit, and not a standard visit, as in the research of Kucia. In Berecka and Kobyłański's research, the vast majority of young people surveyed immediately after visiting the Memorial site and Museum were capable of correctly identifying Jews as the main victims of the camp, who were condemned to total extermination (96% of those surveyed). Slightly fewer respondents – but still a considerable majority – were able to state the total number of victims of the camp (84%). In a series of 15 questions concerning the knowledge of facts about KL Auschwitz, which made up the questionnaire survey, the issue of the extermination of the Roma was the most challenging for young people. The question concerning this aspect of the history of the camp was correctly answered by 66% of respondents.<sup>82</sup> The high percentage of correct answers to the survey questions, which is a test of knowledge, enabled the authors of the study to acknowledge the high effectiveness of the educational programme in the accomplishment of cognitive goals.

This positive cognitive effect was also reflected in the evaluation study of 'The School of Dialogue' programme conducted by a team under the supervision of social psychologist Michał Bilewicz. In this case, knowledge acquired by the participants of the programme referred to the understanding of facts about the former local Jewish community. Upon completion of the programme, the young people in the study expressed a greater sense of knowledge about the Jewish population formerly living in their area, and their place of residence. Several of the participants also pointed out that participation in the workshops had changed their perception of the Jewish minority and strengthened their willingness to engage in the search for further information about their history.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> M. Berecka and T., Kobyłański, *Auschwitz a postrzeganie współczesnego świata. Opis projektu i wyniki badań ankietowych*, 2018 [materials provided by the authors].

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Witkowska et al., „Stracone szanse”.

In turn, the results of research conducted by political scientist and educator Alicja Bartuś among youth from high schools participating in the project 'Małopolska Pamięta' provided quite different conclusions regarding the effectiveness of educational activities.<sup>84</sup> Surveys conducted immediately after the end of the project, which consisted of workshops and standard visits to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, showed that the young people participating in the project had little knowledge of the history of World War Two, including a low level of memory regarding basic facts about Auschwitz. Bartuś found the results unsatisfactory, according to which only 44% of the participants in her educational project were capable of correctly stating the year of establishment of the camp, and 58% correctly stated the number of its victims. Moreover, research has shown that those who visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum again during the project did not remember the information about the camp any better than the others.<sup>85</sup> Bartuś' research findings lead to sad conclusions about the low cognitive effectiveness of both visits to memorial sites and educational workshops, as well as school education.

Several authors indicated the decreasing role of schools in the process of acquiring knowledge about the Holocaust.<sup>86</sup> In this context, the results of research conducted by social psychologists Marta Witkowska, Anna Stefaniak and Michał Bilewicz are of particular significance.<sup>87</sup> In their opinion, the level and validity of students' factual knowledge are practically unrelated to school History education. The researchers noticed that knowledge about the Holocaust is systematically decreasing among school pupils, while students without basic knowledge in this field are

---

<sup>84</sup> Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci”, pp. 271–289.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> See e.g. Kucia, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny*; Praga, „Rola i znaczenie pamięci”, pp. 541–660; J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and R. Szuchta, „The intricacies of education about the Holocaust in Poland. Ten years after the Jedwabne debate, what can Polish school students learn about the Holocaust in history classes?”, *Intercultural Education*, 25(4) (2014), pp. 283–299.

<sup>87</sup> Witkowska et al., „Stracone szanse?”.

also unfamiliar with other facts from the past.<sup>88</sup> In the research in question, the knowledge of school youth was tested based on three questions on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (the date of its outbreak, the name of the leader and the result of the Uprising), supplemented with questions regarding the success of the most important national uprisings.<sup>89</sup> The accuracy of the answers to the above questions was compared with the grade obtained by a given student in History as well as with the number of lesson hours devoted to the subject of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in their schools. The research showed that one in four secondary school students surveyed misunderstood most of the basic facts about the Ghetto Uprising, while answers to questions about the fate of Jews did not differ significantly from the students' general lack of historical knowledge, measured in this case by the level of accuracy of the answers about the success of the most important national uprisings. The analysis of the correctness of the answers to the above questions, along with the final evaluation and the number of hours dedicated to the subject of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, also revealed a weak correlation between the correct answers to the fact-finding questions and the evaluation of history, and the absence of such a correlation for the length of time spent teaching about the Uprising.<sup>90</sup> The results obtained helped to formulate conclusions about the low effectiveness of the school in transferring knowledge about the Holocaust, as well as in the teaching of History in general.

### **Building a conviction about the importance of Auschwitz and the Holocaust**

From an educational perspective, fostering a belief in the importance of Auschwitz and the Holocaust is defined as a desirable result of educational activities. A discussion is ongoing, however, within the milieu on how to use the special and historical character of the Holocaust and its universal dimension as a crime against humanity and an

---

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid; Bilewicz et al., "How to Teach about the Holocaust?"

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

example of human rights violations in education.<sup>91</sup> In this discussion, we will find advocates of an educational concept focused on the Holocaust primarily because of its historical significance, as well as proponents of an approach in which education about the history of the Holocaust should be an introduction to teaching about contemporary cases of crimes against humanity and human rights violations.<sup>92</sup>

From the perspective of empirical exploration of the outcomes of educational activities, research seems to provide results showing that these activities, especially those carried out in memorial sites and museums, strengthen the sense of the significance of Auschwitz and the Holocaust.

The questionnaire survey conducted in 2000 under the supervision of Marek Kucia among students visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, before and after the visit, showed the great importance of Auschwitz in the historical memory of young Poles. What is more, the visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau strengthened this conviction. When asked to indicate one of the most important events in the history of Poland during World War Two from a list, the participants of the survey most often pointed to 'Oświęcim'. 42% of respondents indicated this before the visit and 56% after the visit.<sup>93</sup>

According to Alicja Bartuś' research, almost 90% of the students of Małopolska schools she surveyed are convinced that the history of Auschwitz is very important or quite important for Poles. A similar percentage of young people participating in the research declared that history in general, and especially the history of World War Two, is of interest to them.<sup>94</sup>

Katarzyna Stec's research conducted in 2010 among school children visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek and Treblinka Memorial sites

---

<sup>91</sup> J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, „...wobec rozmiarów Zagłady świat doświadczył ogromnej winy...’ Debaty wokół nauczania o Holokauście”, *Studia nad Autorytaryzmem i Totalitaryzmem*, 38(2) (2016), 23 et seq.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Kucia, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny*, p. 302.

<sup>94</sup> Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci”, p. 283.

and Museums provides analogous results about the significance of the past. A vast majority of the surveyed youth believed that preserving the memory of the past is important or very important for every individual (over 80%), including themselves (approx. 75%). Simultaneously, more than 80% of the surveyed young people also agreed that everyone should visit the memorial sites and museums founded on the grounds of the former camps at least once in their lifetime, chiefly because of the importance of the subject matter they address.<sup>95</sup>

Fundamentally, it seems that at the declarative level, young people in Poland are characterised by a great deal of cognitive curiosity and interest in the subject of camps, the Holocaust and World War Two in general. In this regard, the results of empirical studies are consistent. The majority of participants in the research conducted by Katarzyna Stec, Agnieszka Praga, Grzegorz Żuk and Alicja Bartuś declared their willingness to deepen and further the knowledge gained during their visit to the Memorial site.<sup>96</sup> Similarly, participation in educational programmes seems to stimulate young people to explore the subject matter further and sensitise them to its importance. Michał Bilewicz and his team also came to such conclusions during a study involving participants of ‘The School of Dialogue’.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> K. Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci utworzonych na terenach byłych obozów koncentracyjnych i zagłady z perspektywy współczesnego młodego człowieka”, in: M. Kucia (ed.), *Antysemityzm, Holokaust, Auschwitz w badaniach społecznych*, Kraków, 2011, pp. 37–54; K. Stec, „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci dla współczesnego młodego człowieka – doświadczenie edukacyjne czy turystyczne”, in: P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz i Holokaust. Edukacja w szkole i w miejscu pamięci*, pp. 287–297.

<sup>96</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; Praga, „Rola i znaczenie pamięci”, pp. 541–660; G. Żuk, „Refleksja w miejscu pamięci. Badania empiryczne wśród uczestników lekcji muzealnych w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku”, in: W. Wysok (ed.), *Edukacja pozaszkolna w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Jak przygotować, przeprowadzić i podsumować zajęcia dla uczniów*, Lublin, 2014, pp. 103–109; Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci”, p. 283.

<sup>97</sup> A. Stefaniak, *Szkoła Dialogu jako narzędzie budowania lokalnego kapitału społecznego. Wyniki badań ewaluacyjnych 2012–2017. Raport z badań ewaluacyjnych*, Centrum Analiz Międzynarodowego Instytutu Społeczeństwa Obywatelskiego, 2018, [https://camiso.org.pl/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Szkoła\\_dialogu\\_Raport.pdf](https://camiso.org.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/Szkoła_dialogu_Raport.pdf) [accessed: 01.10.2018].

In turn, however, it seems that the declarations of young people about their interest in the subject of camps, the Holocaust and the past in general, and the significance of this subject, do not necessarily go hand in hand with real practices. Admittedly, there are no studies that would verify declarations by comparing them with real practices, but the analysis of declarations of practices in this field allows us to conclude that the real involvement of young people in exploring this issue is extremely low. For instance, Alicja Bartuś' study indicates that there is little real interest in the subject of Auschwitz and the Holocaust, both in terms of deepening knowledge through the independent use of additional sources and in the context of personal, family history.<sup>98</sup> In response to a question on knowledge of literature and films about Auschwitz, 83% of those surveyed replied that they had never read any books on the subject of the camp, while 42% had not seen any films on the subject. More than 40% of the respondents were also not interested in whether any of their loved ones had been imprisoned in KL Auschwitz or had lost their lives there during the war. Moreover, half of them never learned about the fate of any of the prisoners of the camp.<sup>99</sup> In the survey by Agnieszka Praga, 66% of the young Poles questioned had no such knowledge of their relatives, and according to their declarations, this subject rarely appeared as a topic of conversation in the family.<sup>100</sup>

The diminishing role of the family and the intergenerational message in the process of assimilating knowledge about the Holocaust are also evidenced by the results of other studies.<sup>101</sup> For example, Robert Szuchta's survey showed that only 34% of young people indicated family as a source of knowledge and information about recent history in general.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci”, p. 283.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 277 et seq.

<sup>100</sup> Praga, „Rola i znaczenie pamięci”, p. 557 et seq.

<sup>101</sup> Kucia, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny*; Idem, „KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów”, pp. 99–108; Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Szuchta, „The intricacies of education”, pp. 283–299.

<sup>102</sup> Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Szuchta, “The intricacies of education”, pp. 283–299.

In Katarzyna Stec's research, however, as many as 71% of respondents believed that families should discuss the fate of people during World War Two.<sup>103</sup> Conversely, in the context of other institutions, such as schools, museums and memorials or the media, the family was not often identified as the main channel of knowledge about the past. In response to the question who should, above all, disseminate knowledge about the fate of people during World War Two, 30% of respondents indicated the family (among others), whereas only 2% listed it as the sole and primary source of knowledge.<sup>104</sup>

### Developing sensitivity and empathy

In addition to providing reliable knowledge and awareness of the importance of these events in history, education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust should, according to its theoreticians and practitioners, also promote specific attitudes and values, especially openness to others, responsibility, empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others.<sup>105</sup> The goals and educational results are extensive. They relate, on the one hand, to general moral and ethical issues, including sensitivity to the fate of others. On the other hand, they refer to the problem of discrimination against other people related to the causes of the Holocaust, including the phenomena of anti-Semitism or ethnocentrism. From a broader perspective, they also touch upon the issues of authoritarianism, threats and consequences of violating the norms and values of democracy.

<sup>103</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> T. Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci*, Lublin, 2002; T. Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci. Zarys problematyki*, Lublin, 2009; A. Stępnik, „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci z punktu widzenia dydaktyki historii”, in: T. Kranz (ed.), *Wizyty edukacyjne w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Poradnik dla nauczycieli*, Lublin, 2012, pp. 51–63; W. Wysok, „Wokół problematyki uwarunkowań i efektów edukacji w muzeum upamiętnienia”, *Zeszyty Majdanka*, vol. 26 (2014), pp. 311–340; G. Żuk, „Refleksja w miejscu pamięci. Badania empiryczne wśród uczestników lekcji muzealnych w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku”, in: W. Wysok (ed.), *Edukacja pozaszkolna w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Jak przygotować, przeprowadzić i podsumować zajęcia dla uczniów*, Lublin, 2014, pp. 103–109.

In terms of developing the sensitivity of participants in education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, empirical research clearly shows that a visit to memorial sites and museums created in the post-camp areas has a strong emotional impact on young people, and in shaping and strengthening their empathy and compassion for the victims of the camps. It is, however, worth noting in this context that it is not the only way to channel emotions evoked by the visit. As indicated by Katarzyna Stec's research, a visit to museums and memorial sites also evokes a feeling of appreciation and respect among young people for Poles, their compatriots, who, in their opinion, fought heroically at that time and died as martyrs. Some participants of her qualitative research also pointed to feelings of reluctance or even hatred towards the perpetrators as a result of the visit.<sup>106</sup>

Nevertheless, the results of the first survey conducted by Jolanta Adamska among visitors to the Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Sztutowo and Rogoźnica Memorial sites and Museums showed that visits to these places were, first of all, received very emotionally by young people, and their comments testified above all to their great sensitivity. The most common expressions used by young people to verbalise their reflections are: 'shock, feelings of surprise, anxiety, disbelief, dejection, bitterness, horror, fear and incomprehension of human nature, compassion for prisoners, and fear of recurrence of the past'.<sup>107</sup>

A study carried out in 2011 under the guidance of Jadwiga Berbeka provides similar data on the effects of a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial Site.<sup>108</sup> Accordingly, more than 90% of those surveyed believed that the visit had instilled in them respect for life, while a similar percentage indicated that it had aroused their sensitivity

---

<sup>106</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”.

<sup>107</sup> J. Adamska, „Muzea – miejsca pamięci w oczach młodzieży. Omówienie rezultatów ankietyzacji przeprowadzonej w 1994 r. przez Radę Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa”, *Przeszłość i pamięć*, 1(2) (1997), pp. 10 et seq.

<sup>108</sup> J. Berbeka (ed.), *Turystyka martyrologiczna w Polsce na przykładzie Państwowego Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau*, Kraków, 2012.

to human suffering, prompted reflection on genocide and forced them to reflect on the contemporary moral condition of societies.<sup>109</sup>

Sławoj Tanaś considers the evoking of emotions characteristic of communing with death and suffering through a visit to the Museum and Memorial site as a factor that ‘shapes feelings that are a conscious interpretation of emotions, sensitises to the sacrum of death, liberates empathy towards suffering and pain after the death of a fellow human’.<sup>110</sup> In the opinion of the author, tourism to such places can, therefore, play an andragogical role, by accomplishing the tasks of pedagogy oriented towards patriotic education, as well as universal sensitivity to other people.<sup>111</sup>

On the other hand, however, attention must be drawn to the results of studies that analyse in more detail the range and direction of emotions triggered by a visit to an authentic memorial site. Firstly, at a declarative level, young people are dominated by emotions that are typical of identifying oneself with the victims, or of interpreting the actions of prisoners in the camps in almost heroic terms.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, the most frequently mentioned emotions are ‘regret’, ‘sadness’ and ‘respect’ or ‘admiration’, whereas the most rarely mentioned are ‘shame’, ‘guilt’ or ‘feelings of responsibility’.<sup>113</sup> Secondly, the selective sensitivity of young people is also mentioned by Alicja Bartuś who, based on her survey results, concludes that the compassion expressed among the students participating in her research for children in Auschwitz did not translate into the same feelings on the victims of contemporary wars in Africa or Asia.<sup>114</sup> To the open question, ‘What is Auschwitz to you?’ the surveyed youth rarely referred to the situation of the victims of contemporary wars and

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 156 et seq.

<sup>110</sup> S. Tanaś, *Tanatoturystyka. Od przestrzeni śmierci do przestrzeni turystycznej*, Łódź, 2013, p. 133.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; Żuk, „Refleksja w miejscu pamięci”, pp. 103–109.

<sup>113</sup> Bilewicz et al., “How to Teach about the Holocaust?”.

<sup>114</sup> Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci”, p. 283.

conflicts; they did not see the connection between the mechanisms of crime in the past and the present world.<sup>115</sup>

Surveys on the effects of formal education conducted in schools provide comparatively more information on the impact of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust regarding the abatement of anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism. Unfortunately, both the research of Ambrosewicz-Jacobs and Witkowska, Stefaniak and Bilewicz showed poor results of school education in mitigating anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism.<sup>116</sup> Furthermore, the latter's research showed that the scope of school education about the Holocaust, and the students' assessments, seem to be significantly related to their idealised views on national history: the broader the school teaching about the Holocaust, the more likely it was that the students noticed that the assistance provided by Poles to Jews was overly extensive. Thus, the authors of the research conclude: "The school's efforts to combat prejudice proved to be far from sufficient, and paradoxically counterproductive in some respects, thereby strengthening negative attitudes towards Jews."<sup>117</sup>

### **Arousing patriotic, civic and humanistic feelings**

Another effect of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, mentioned in the context of sensitivity towards the fate of others, is the awakening and shaping of patriotic and civic feelings and, in a broader sense, humanistic feelings.<sup>118</sup>

In this case, empirical research carried out among young people visiting memorials and museums provides relatively better information. According to these studies, a visit to such sites triggers the closest frame of reference in the interpretation of the meaning of memory

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, pp. 285 et seq.

<sup>116</sup> J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, "Attitudes of Young Poles toward Jews in Post-1989 Poland", *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 14(3) (2000), pp. 565–596; Witkowska et al., „Stracone szanse?”.

<sup>117</sup> Witkowska et al., „Stracone szanse?”, p. 153.

<sup>118</sup> Żuk, „Refleksja w miejscu pamięci”, pp. 103–109.

– the national frame, strengthening the conviction about the value of participation in one's national group and the sharing of 'our' mutual past.<sup>119</sup> Additionally, a visit to a memorial site increases the belief in the martyrdom of one's group and even generates fear of the extinction of one's national group.<sup>120</sup> It also automatically stimulates negative thinking about the German nation and increases social distance towards Germans.<sup>121</sup>

Referring to the results of her empirical research, Bartuś emphasises that after a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, young people often discussed the subject of patriotism, which usually referred to the context of the war, because it is associated with the struggle for the homeland and the defence of its freedom.<sup>122</sup> Such an interpretation often went hand in hand with a high level of declared national pride and even nationalist attitudes.<sup>123</sup>

The treatment of visits to memorial sites and museums by young people as an experience embedded in discussions about national identity is not a phenomenon specific only to this age group. Generally speaking, for Poles, the Second World War remains above all a source of pride. According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Polish Academy of Sciences and Pentor on a representative sample of adult Poles in 2003, World War Two was indicated as a reason for pride by half of the respondents to the questionnaire interviews; it was considered a period

<sup>119</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; K. Stec, „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci dla współczesnego młodego człowieka – doświadczenie edukacyjne czy turystyczne”, in: P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz i Holokaust. Edukacja w szkole i w miejscu pamięci*, Oświęcim, 2014, pp. 287–297.

<sup>120</sup> K. Skarżyńska, K. Przybyła, A.D. Wójcik, „Grupowa martyrologia: psychologiczne funkcje przekonań o narodowej krzywdzie”, *Psychologia Społeczna*, vol. 7, 4(23) (2012), pp. 335–352; A. Wójcik, M. Bilewicz, *Oświęcim inaczej. Ewaluacja warsztatów antydyskryminacyjnych*, Warszawa, 2012.

<sup>121</sup> M. Kucia, *KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów. Komunikat z badań*, Kraków, 2005 [typescript]; Kucia, „KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów”, pp. 99–108; Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; Wójcik and Bilewicz, *Oświęcim inaczej*; Bilewicz et al., „How to Teach about the Holocaust?”.

<sup>122</sup> Bartuś, „Edukacja w Miejscu Pamięci Auschwitz”, p. 288.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

of Polish bravery and perseverance.<sup>124</sup> Tomasz Kranz emphasises that, ‘in the common consciousness of Poles, World War Two was restricted to two types of historical narration: heroism and martyrdom’.<sup>125</sup> Marcin Kula asserts that such an interpretation particularly accompanies ‘history that deviates from standards,’ which most certainly includes the history of concentration and death camps.<sup>126</sup> Therefore, we are dealing with one of the interpretations of history learned during a visit to the Memorial site and Museum: a simplified interpretation of the past presented by young people mainly in black-and-white categories, clearly distinguishing heroes and villains, victims and perpetrators.

At the same time, the results of the analysed research show that a visit to a museum and memorial site does not have a significant impact on the perception of the symbolism of such a site. Marek Kucia’s research has shown that Auschwitz is perceived by young people primarily in Polish-Jewish and universal terms, and a visit to the Museum has little impact on changes of this opinion.<sup>127</sup> Similar conclusions were reached by Katarzyna Stec in her research. A visit to memorial sites preserves the order of remembrance of the past in terms of ‘ownership’ – it is primarily a carrier of universal values in the case of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek, but also strengthens the multinational symbolism of these sites.<sup>128</sup> Thus, the narration of memorial sites, especially the one constructed for the needs of the museums’ operation, structures the experience

<sup>124</sup> P.T. Kwiatkowski, „Czy lata III Rzeczypospolitej były „czasem pamięci”?”, in: A. Szpociński (ed.), *Pamięć zbiorowa jako czynnik integracji i źródło konfliktów*, Warszawa, 2009, pp. 275 et seq.

<sup>125</sup> T. Kranz, *Zbrodnie Nazizmu w świadomości i edukacji historycznej w Polsce i Niemczech*, Lublin, 1998, p. 21.

<sup>126</sup> M. Kula, *Między przeszłością a przyszłością. O pamięci, zapominaniu i przewidywaniu*, Poznań, 2004, p. 80.

<sup>127</sup> Kucia, „Auschwitz w percepcji”, pp. 17–26; Idem, *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny*; M. Kucia, *KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów. Komunikat z badań*, Kraków, 2005 [typescript].

<sup>128</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; Stec, „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci”, pp. 287–297.

of young Poles and is a tool for transmitting universal symbolism and human values.<sup>129</sup>

### Emotional experience, affective cognition

On the role of visits to memorial sites and museums established in the post-camp areas, the researchers all agree that such visits have a particular impact on the emotional sphere, especially on young people. This effect does not only apply to the emphatic reactions of the visitors to the fate of the camp victims, but also the mental and physical wellbeing of the visitors themselves. Some studies provide data that show that the emotions evoked by this experience last longer than the visit itself.<sup>130</sup> Roma Sendyka speaks in this context of a sudden affective experience. As she argues, it is an affective experience, not an emotional one, because in her opinion, 'the event takes place inside the visitor, in a pre-personal area beyond the conscious control of the visitor.'<sup>131</sup>

The emotional dimension of the visit is no surprise, bearing in mind both the history of the memorial sites and museums established on the grounds of the former camps and the factual or visual aspect (the remains of the camp, the objects left behind by the deportees and prisoners). The fact that emotional experience is the distinctive factor after the visit is also of little surprise. A visit to memorial sites and museums such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Treblinka and the like undoubtedly evokes emotions that seem to last for some time after the visit and, along with the knowledge acquired, become the basis for reflection on the importance of memory about the past, past generations, history and its significance for young people. Interaction, albeit symbolic, with death and suffering, especially in the extreme conditions of a concentration

<sup>129</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 37–54; A.M. Wierzbicka, *Architektura miejsc pamięci jako forma strukturująca doświadczenia zbiorowe na przykładzie obiektów świadectwa Holokaustu*, Kraków, 2011.

<sup>130</sup> Bilewicz and Wójcik, “*Visiting Auschwitz: Evidence*”, pp. 328–334.

<sup>131</sup> R. Sendyka, „Miejsca, które straszą (afekty i nie-miejsca pamięci)”, *Teksty Drugie*, 1 (2014), pp. 84–102.

and extermination camp, arouses emotions such as fear or anxiety, but also indirectly stimulates reflection.<sup>132</sup> The results of the study mentioned above, conducted in 2011 under the direction of Jadwiga Berbeka, testify to the intense emotionality of the visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum.<sup>133</sup> Although the survey focused on visitors from different age groups, nearly half of them were under 24 years of age. The participants of the questionnaire survey were asked, after the visit, to share their feelings during the tour of the former camp. The participants most often listed three types of feelings: sadness (64%), reverie and reflection (54%) and affection (37%).<sup>134</sup>

In the study by Katarzyna Stec, young people underlined that it was very important, and also emotional, to experience a real, tangible story during a visit to a given memorial site. The visited site is for them an authentic image of history, which allows them to ‘feel the enormity of the tragedies of those years and stimulate imagination, but also sensitivity’ and, above all, ‘fully recognise and understand the horror of war’.<sup>135</sup> Jolanta Adamska wrote earlier about the significance of the authenticity of the visited site, stating that it is ‘the authenticity of the site, facilities, prisoners’ objects and their number’ that seems to have the greatest impact on the perception of a young person exploring places of remembrance and museums.<sup>136</sup>

To this end, it is also worth mentioning the experimental psychological studies conducted by Michał Bilewicz and Adrian Dominik Wójcik, whose main purpose was to assess the scale of secondary traumatising among visitors to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum. The study showed that secondary post-traumatic stress disorder was observed among 13.2% of young visitors, whilst a longitudinal analysis confirmed

<sup>132</sup> Adamska, „Muzea – miejsca pamięci w oczach młodzieży”, pp. 8–13; J. Berbeka (ed.), *Turystyka martyrologiczna*; S. Tanaś, *Przestrzeń turystyczna cmentarzy*; S. Tanaś, *Tanatourystyka. Od przestrzeni śmierci do przestrzeni turystycznej*, Łódź, 2013.

<sup>133</sup> Berbeka (ed.), *Turystyka martyrologiczna w Polsce*.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156 et seq.

<sup>135</sup> Stec, „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci”, pp. 51–52.

<sup>136</sup> Adamska, „Muzea – miejsca pamięci”, p. 10.

that emphatic reactions to the visit to Auschwitz (e.g. strong identification with the fate of victims) were associated with a higher level of secondary post-traumatic stress and persisted even one month after the visit.<sup>137</sup> Consequently, the researchers concluded that visits to places connected with traumatic events in the past should be preceded by more intensive preparations, not only substantive but also appropriate psychological preparations.

### **Challenges to research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust**

In analysing the results of research projects conducted so far on the issues of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, it is also advisable to look at the conceptual and methodological layers of these research projects. Such empirical research dimensions are particularly important for discussing the challenges of measuring the effects of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. The empirical research discussed above does not always seem to provide an explicit interpretation of how this education translates into an increase in the level of knowledge or a change in attitudes and values of participants in this process.

At a methodological level, the previous empirical studies are based on the acquisition of data using survey techniques, which rely on the answers given by the participants in these studies. Some studies also have an important qualitative component that broadens the interpretation of derived quantitative results. Research using evaluation methodologies to measure the degree of achievement of the assumed objectives and obtained results are also becoming increasingly popular. To measure a possible change in knowledge, attitudes and values, longitudinal research methodology is also used, i.e. conducted on the same research group over a longer period of time, or panel research, in which a specific measure is performed repeatedly on the same group of people, using the same research tool (e.g. a questionnaire).

Difficulties in measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, however, appear from the basic

---

<sup>137</sup> Bilewicz and Wójcik, "Visiting Auschwitz: Evidence", pp. 3 et seq.

operational level of research. While the definition of the goals and effects of Holocaust education in the conceptual layer, using a certain simplification, boils down to indicating two of its basic components – transfer of reliable knowledge and shaping of specific values and attitudes – in the case of measuring these components there is no compatibility and certainty as to how and where to establish the so-called satisfactory minimum in terms of the scope or durability of the expected change.

This also raises the question of the research subject itself. In the case of the study of the effectiveness of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, does one refer to the so-called net value of education, i.e. the effect attributed solely to educational activities, with the deduction of changes resulting from the influence of other non-educational factors? And if so, is it possible to obtain such a value at all? As the research discussed above shows, participants in the organised educational process, be it at schools, memorial sites, museums or other institutions, are equipped at the outset with a certain set of ideas about history, shaped by family or culture and conditioned by the socio-political or media discourse prevailing in a given context. After all, the issue of Auschwitz and the Holocaust is not taught in vain. Moreover, in the case of young recipients of structured educational activities, the process of developing knowledge and shaping beliefs and attitudes is not only a long-term process but also a dynamic one, given the impact of various factors and the development period of the recipients.

From the above, two directions of empirical exploration of the issues of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust seem to be the most reasonable and worth pursuing.

Firstly, in terms of optimisation of educational activities, the broader use of evaluation studies designed for specific educational programmes may be a valuable source of recommendations on the effectiveness of different methods in working with students and provide guidance on how, and to what extent, knowledge about Auschwitz and the Holocaust should be transferred to achieve the desired educational goals and effects. The trend in question is still not sufficiently applied in evaluation research, and in our opinion, it should be an integral part of any

educational activity. The optimal way would be to take measurements in several time frames to capture any possible change in both factual knowledge and attitudes and convictions.

Secondly, in analysing the broader educational process, it seems particularly important that the identification of factors that differentiate the effectiveness of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust should be explored further. This trend in empirical research allows us to identify and explain various social and cultural contexts, as well as individual factors that determine the functioning of educational processes. In its structured form, the educational process conducted in schools or other educational institutions is also regarded as one of the components contributing to the acquisition of knowledge in the field of the discussed issues. In the methodological dimension, the proposed in-depth identification of factors in the educational process requires measurement spread out over a period of time to capture the variability of analysed factors and contexts. It also seems justified to supplement the declarations of direct participants of the educational process with data collected from other people involved in the process: families, educators, teachers or even the neighbouring community. Given its complexity and variability over time, this research trend poses a particular challenge to researchers of the discussed issues.

Alternatively, case study research could be the starting point for identifying these factors and discovering mechanisms, using case study methodology and analysis with the assumption of measurement over time, according to the principles of longitudinal studies but limited to a certain test sample. As a research strategy, a case study focuses on understanding the dynamics of a single set of cases in a specific situational context. Nevertheless, multiple case studies provide the possibility of formulating certain generalisations while maintaining the specificity of individual sets. Simultaneously, this research strategy offers the possibility of using different research methods, both qualitative and quantitative.

As for research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in different contexts, the case study strategy may serve to build a model of

educational impact on knowledge, impressions and attitudes, as well as on the values of young people, together with identification of the possible distinguishing factors of this effect. At a further stage of analysis, this type of model could be tested and modified in broader research sets. Such a research approach seems to combine both the contextual diversity of educational activities and the attempt to capture more general, perhaps even universal, mechanisms occurring during these activities.

### **Summary**

The aim of the analysis carried out in this article was to indicate the main directions of the empirical research on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, summarise the results of the research in the context of considerations on the effectiveness of this education and indicate possible directions for further development of empirical research in this area.

The analysis showed, among other factors, that the issue of effective education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust is increasingly often discussed not only as a sphere of practical activities and the subject of pedagogical reflection, but also as a subject of empirical research, primarily in the field of the social sciences. While the analysed research does not always provide clear and consistent conclusions as to the effectiveness of teaching about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, it certainly constitutes an important source of information about its effects, especially those unintended and unexpected as desirable goals of educational activities. Nevertheless, empirical research is still not an integral part of the processes related to the evaluation of the effectiveness of these activities.

Accordingly, among the potential directions for further development of empirical research in this area, we see the need for greater inclusion of research in pedagogical practice as a tool for measuring the effectiveness of education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. Furthermore, we notice the usefulness of further and broader exploration of the issue of this education in terms of identifying individual, social and cultural factors that may have an impact on its effectiveness, including using a longer-term perspective than the educational activity itself.

ALICJA BARTUŚ

# On How to React to Evil: A Visit to Auschwitz and Attitude Shaping

## Introduction

In 2015, during commemorative events to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of the former KL Auschwitz camp, Roman Kent said that, *“Our shared duty [...] is to ingrain in the current and future generations the knowledge of what happens when we let strong prejudice and hatred flourish. At homes and in schools, we need to teach our children tolerance and understanding.”*

The former prisoner of the Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen camps made the observation that, *“tolerance is not obvious. It has to be taught. And we need to explain that hatred is never justified and love is never bad.”* He added that we should all get involved in it: *“if I had such power, I would add to the universally accepted Ten Commandments an eleventh one: “You shall never ever be a passive bystander”.*<sup>138</sup>

This particularly important message, resulting from personal experience but also from many years of a former prisoners’ reflections concentrated on shaping post-war generations, perfectly marks the direction of education conducted based on Auschwitz and other memorial sites. Its ultimate objective should consist not only in providing reliable information, but also in promoting reflection and motivating people to act against evil. This activity is crucial in order to be able to effectively change the world.

---

<sup>138</sup> <http://auschwitz.org/muzeum/aktualnosci/nie-badz-bierynym-obszerwatozem-70-rocznica-wyzwolenia-auschwitz-,1695.html> [accessed: 10.08.2018].

Nowadays, in the era of the Internet, we encounter the dominance of passiveness, temporary action or, at most, slacktivism, i.e. passive social and political activism.<sup>139</sup> When we intend to support an idea or a cause which we consider important, we are more and more likely to limit ourselves to simply clicking ‘Like’ on social media. Although this does, of course, represent an important step in shaping morale and general attitudes around a given issue, it does not replace genuine activity in real life, as this is the only source of power to change the world for the better.

Many years of experience of working with young people has shown that teaching about Auschwitz as only a fragment of history, an event from the past, to which humanity can only look back on and hope will never happen again, does not make much sense. It is also questionable to exclusively teach facts, without placing them in not only a historical, but also civilizational and humanistic context. The story about Auschwitz as a unique, but at the same time universal, phenomenon, is a good starting point for deeper human reflection. Not in the past, but here and now.

Let us repeat Roman Kent’s important words: *“to ingrain in the current and future generations the knowledge of what happens when we let strong prejudice and hatred flourish.”* Within this approach, it is key to get to know the essence and mechanisms of the emergence, development and, finally, perpetration of evil. Only on such a substrate can we sow and root the grains of sensitivity towards harm and resistance to evil. This requires good knowledge and understanding of historical facts. An important remark should be made here: when we talk about “the birth of evil” and its origins, it often appears that we have different understandings of this concept, particularly between those used in the public sphere and by young people; for example, whether this constitutes nationalism and patriotism or xenophobia and a seemingly justified fear towards “strangers”. This aspect should also be taken into account in educational activities: from the very beginning, we need to define the language we use in a clear and precise way.

---

<sup>139</sup> Social or political activism consisting in performing exclusively simple tasks which do not require special involvement, e.g. writing posts or signing petitions online. Source: Dictionary of the Polish Language, <https://sjp.pl/slaktywizm> [accessed: 10.09.2018].

In Poland and Europe, radical forces are gaining strength in the local environment; nationalist and populist slogans are gaining popularity; and so the understanding of elementary values is sometimes becoming distorted. For this reason, it is necessary to remind people of the human rights with which their way of living is determined.

We have said many times that educators' tasks primarily consist of shaping society to be more aware of hazards and more resistant to criminal ideologies. This cannot be achieved, however, through the administration of dry facts, dates and numbers. Searching for methods that encourage young people, on the one hand, to deepen their knowledge about the world, and on the other, to be active in defence of the principles of a liberal democratic state and provide assistance to vulnerable groups, seem to be the current priority. I am deeply convinced that what can largely support this process is a visit to the Auschwitz Memorial site, but this education has to include broader activities beyond visiting the former camp premises – even when young people are accompanied by the best guides, experts in knowledge-sharing and arousing great sympathy for the victims.<sup>140</sup>

The present article constitutes an attempt to reflect on the efficiency of education based on the history of Auschwitz, taking into account the conclusions of the project 'Małopolska Pamięta' (Lesser Poland Remembers) undertaken with secondary schools students since 2016.<sup>141</sup>

### **Coming to the Memorial**

At Auschwitz, different memories (Jewish, Roma, Polish, Russian, German, but also the memory of Jehovah's Witnesses or homosexuals) form a universal human memory of the place. Auschwitz is and will forever remain the symbol of the Holocaust, an unprecedented crime committed against the Jews by German Nazis. At the same time, in recent years we have seen the

---

<sup>140</sup> See also: T. Kranz (ed.), *Pedagogika pamięci. O teorii i praktyce edukacji w muzeach martyrologicznych*, Lublin, 2018.

<sup>141</sup> The results of this study are discussed in more detail in the article: A. Bartuś, „Edukacja w miejscu pamięci Auschwitz w świetle ankiet przeprowadzonych wśród małopolskich uczniów w 2016 roku”, in: A. Bartuś (ed.), *Dzieci wojny*, Oświęcim, 2016.

intensification of the meaning of the Memorial Site as a global symbol of genocide, all victims of which have been completely innocent individuals.<sup>142</sup> The preservation of Auschwitz's universal symbolism makes it a reference point for many other crimes in the world and an element in debates concerning the moral condition of humanity. Places and situations in regions where criminal systems are or were functioning, where human rights are violated, are compared to Auschwitz. We hear about the 'Auschwitz of the Far East' (referring to the activities of the secret 731 unit in Manchuria), the 'Asian Auschwitz' (in connection with the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge and the S-21 prison in Cambodia) or the 'African Auschwitz' (describing the bloody rule of Francisco Macías Nguema in Equatorial Guinea, the situation in Darfur or the Herrero and Nama genocide).<sup>143</sup> This universal/multi-dimensional symbolism of Auschwitz is also referred to by visitors of this place. Every year, more than two million people from all over the world come to the Museum and often look for references to 'their histories.'

People's main reasons for coming to the Memorial site are depicted by the circle of motivation (Diagram 1). The central part is occupied by COMING TO/BEING AT Auschwitz – having a physical presence in the place where suffering and death became a reality. At Auschwitz, these notions are no longer abstract. Not only the Holocaust, but all

<sup>142</sup> It is referred to by both scholars and journalists describing such crimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries as those in Cambodia, Bosnia or Rwanda, e.g. D. Pua, Unit 731: The Forgotten Asian Auschwitz by 1936–1945, <http://ahrp.org/1936-1945-unit-731-the-asian-auschwitz/> [accessed: 10.05.2018]; Shirō Ishii, Unit 731, Asian Auschwitz, <https://didoisux.wordpress.com/tag/asian-auschwitz/> [accessed: 10.05.2018]; E. Reeves, African Auschwitz: The Concentration Camps of Darfur, <http://sudanreeves.org/2004/12/15/african-auschwitz-the-concentration-camps-of-darfur-the-un-and-the-international-community-are-acquiescing-in-genocide-may-12-2004/> [accessed: 10.05.2018]; J. Liberty, Africa's Auschwitz: Death Island, The Concentration Camp The West Erased From History, <https://thefreethoughtproject.com/death-island-concentration-camp-history/> [accessed: 10.05.2018]; Macias Nguema – Pol Pot Afryki, <http://afryka.org/afryka/macias-nguema---pol-pot-afryki.news/> [accessed: 10.05.2018].

<sup>143</sup> See more: A. Bartuś, „Wizyta w Auschwitz – element budowy pamięci zbiorowej o wydarzeniach z przeszłości czy punkt wyjścia do edukacji o współczesności? Zarys problemu”, in: B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, A. Słaby (eds.), *Historia – Pamięć – Tożsamość w edukacji humanistycznej. Vol. III, Pamięć człowieka, pamięć miejsca, miejsca pamięci. Studia Historyczno-Antropologiczne*, Kraków, 2015, pp. 163–177.

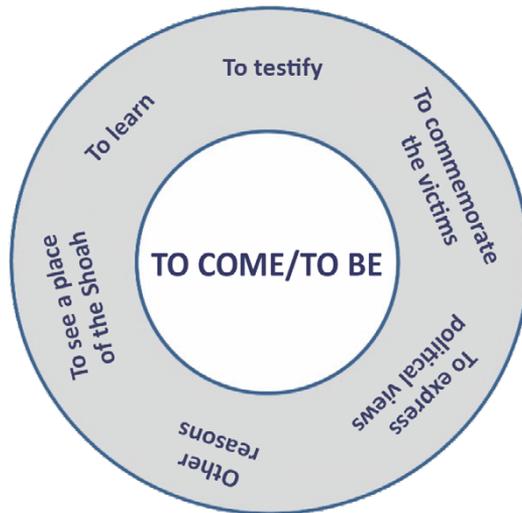
similar crimes committed, receive a special and real dimension here. It is connected with the authenticity of the place in which we are standing. This virtually palpable contact with history, which allows us to “touch the fate of the victims,” also creates a special context for education. Its essence is very well presented in the words of students taking part in the ‘Lesser Poland Remembers’ programme in 2017:

Natalia (17 years old): *I’ve really heard a lot about Auschwitz, but having been there I somehow understand it all in a different way.*

Piotr (17 years old): *It’s different when we read about it and different when we see it ourselves. I’ll always remember that it all begins with words – the Holocaust of the Jews, the genocide against the Tutsi, but also the history of all those who were at Auschwitz and other camps.*

Paulina (17 years old): *Before coming to Auschwitz I had heard a lot about this place, but only after I saw it myself did the truth of what happened here reach me.*<sup>144</sup>

Diagram 1. The circle of motivation



Source: Author’s work

<sup>144</sup> Questionnaires with these responses are owned by the author. The responses were published on the Oświęcim Institute of Human Rights Facebook profile: <https://pl-pl.facebook.com/OswiecimskiInstytutPrawCzlowieka/> [accessed: 10.06.2018].

The main reasons for visitors coming to the Auschwitz Memorial site are:

- **testifying to the truth** (this refers to former prisoners and direct witnesses of history, who testify about the crimes committed here with their very presence);
- **commemorating the victims** (visitors pay homage to the victims: they lay wreaths, light candles, pray, take part in commemorative events);
- **seeing a place of the Shoah** (for some of them this is another very famous “tourist attraction” to be seen; emotional connection with the history of this place is barely perceptible);
- **expressing political views** (this refers to groups for whom the visit constitutes an element of political demonstration, e.g. artistic performances, the arrival of the Russian group the Night Wolves or groups of teenagers from Israel or Great Britain, participating in programmes which matches the policy implemented by these states);
- **learning** (while coming to this place students, but also adults, want to learn the history of Auschwitz, the history of this Holocaust symbol, but they are also searching for their own national references in this place);
- **other reasons** (unspecified; these motives are usually not disclosed, e.g. fascination with the crime committed by the Nazis).

### **Provide the knowledge and the impulse to act**

In education based on the Memorial site, the most important aspect consists of the objectives achieved through learning about this place, together with prioritization of these goals. It is strictly connected with providing the answer to two questions: Why do we teach about the Holocaust and other crimes? In places such as Auschwitz, should we teach only about the functioning of the camp, or should we also make reference to the modern world? In my opinion, it is more appropriate not to limit ourselves to sharing only the history of the place. Such attitude remains difficult, however, especially in a period of strong political disputes referring to the shape of historical memory, and sometimes even to attitudes towards understanding the values that are fundamental for human rights.

The educator's task is to motivate people to act, but this should not be done by manipulating the facts, promoting half-truths or even lying (despite the good intentions of this goal, this does not justify discreditable activities).

A standard visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum lasts 3.5 hours. The knowledge that one can gain during this time will not be greatly detailed. The group should be prepared for such a visit by the teacher beforehand and – of equal importance – the visit should be concluded with a discussion on what the students experienced, in order for their visit not to remain only a form of interaction with their (often ephemeral) emotions.

Studies conducted among the young clearly show a high level of compassion for the victims. Yet the answer to a seemingly simple question – ‘Where did these victims come from and why were they persecuted?’ – constitutes a real problem for school students. The youngest generations, deprived of their families' historical narratives (which, by contrast, was so natural for post-war generations), have much greater difficulty in placing these events within a civilizational and historical context, and with explaining the causes and consequences of crimes. It is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to comprehend simple witnesses' accounts, as their own experience, together with the experience of their parents and grandparents, is much more distant from the experiences depicted in stories from the camp.<sup>145</sup>

As a result, knowledge of the tragic events of the Second World War and the emotions accompanying these do not translate into opinions or conclusions concerning current tragedies, crimes, conflicts, or into empathy towards victims of contemporary wars. For the young, these are *totally different victims*.<sup>146</sup> In spite of the power of mass media, for example, the bloody and destructive war in Syria remains, for the students, as abstract as the stories from the distant past. Furthermore, from an emotional perspective, these victims arouse much cooler, perhaps even colder, feelings. The interest in the fate of Auschwitz prisoners that emerges during a visit to the site does not motivate them to take an interest in the life of those who

---

<sup>145</sup> This remark refers both to young people from Poland, as well as from other countries.

<sup>146</sup> Such a notion appears in the studies conducted amongst the students taking part in the ‘Lesser Poland Remembers’ project.

are being murdered and persecuted not so far away, and – thanks to the media – in front of the entire world.

In the case of a visit to Auschwitz, the crucial aspect seems to constitute in connecting emotions (opposing evil, violence, intolerance; feeling empathy towards the victims) together with their universalization (making visitors aware of the fact that similar evil is happening “here and now”; that while talking about Auschwitz, we are not just talking about the distant past). In order to achieve such results, we should present young people with the reasons for the camp’s establishment, its functioning and the methodology of the perpetrators together with the prisoners’ experiences, in a way to make them aware and at the same time feel that this story does not refer to “some other” abstract people, but to themselves, their nearest and dearest, relatives and friends.

Klaudia (17 years old): *I was listening and looking around, thinking: everywhere that I’m treading, people were suffering and dying. [...] It scared me that in one place, so much evil could have happened. I don’t know how the prisoners could survive such terror.*

Justyna (17 years old): *Before the visit to Auschwitz, my teachers’ words would never reach my consciousness. I can even say that I did not believe everything I was told. Only what I saw at the Museum showed me that these crimes really happened. I cannot imagine what pain the fathers had to feel seeing their children die... How immense despair must have ruled the hearts of the mothers whose children were taken away by the Nazis.*

Grzegorz (17 years old): *Everyone who hears the word ‘Auschwitz’ should feel a shiver down their spine, and in their head have the question: Why? The visit here should turn on our thinking, “open” our heads.*<sup>147</sup>

How will such a visit change an individual and what will this change consist of? How long does the unique experience of going to this place last? These are very difficult questions.<sup>148</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup> Questionnaires, including students’ responses, are owned by the author.

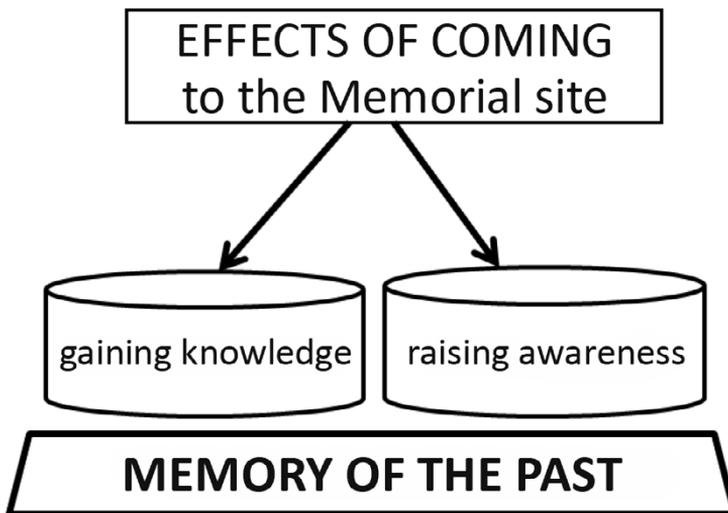
<sup>148</sup> See also: P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz i Holokaust. Edukacja w szkole i miejscu pamięci*, Oświęcim, 2014; *Turystyka w edukacji historycznej i obywatelskiej*, M. Ausz, J. Bugajska-Więcławska, A. Stępnik, D. Szewczuk (eds.), Lublin 2017.

The aims of the visit should undoubtedly consist of:

- arousing interest in the mechanisms of crimes which finished in the establishment of Auschwitz
- making the visitors sensitive to evil in order to undertake prevention and resistance measures.

Both objectives should be based on the foundation of different memories and post-memories, with which we have contact at Auschwitz.

Diagram 2. Effects of arrival at the memorial site



Source: Author's work

Education may not be limited to teaching about facts from the increasingly distant history. The history is happening here and now. The education should be perceived in a much broader way. A visitor leaving the Auschwitz museum should on one hand be aware of the unique character of this crime and have the opposition against its perpetrators and the compassion for all victims without any exceptions deeply ingrained in their mind, but they should also be conscious of the danger of new genocides and notice the sources of hazards – and to react appropriately to them.

Wiktoria (16 years old): *I didn't cry at Auschwitz, not because it did not shock me. I was really scared. Not even by the past, rather by the present. Nowadays, when the last prisoners are passing away, the young shout out their hatred towards Jews. Jews have become a "plague" again.*

Katarzyna (16 years old): *I saw myself, how easily I can be manipulated. I need to try and think in a more independent way.*

Piotr (17 years old): *I realized how easy it is to play on people's emotions and, as a result, arouse in them the fear and indifference towards terrible things.*<sup>149</sup>

### **Comparative studies of Auschwitz**

The history and symbolism of Auschwitz constitute a great starting point for confronting the history of the world in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.<sup>150</sup> Concentrating exclusively on Auschwitz, without any comparison and without understanding of global processes, makes our memory incomplete and impoverishes the teaching process. Thus, we have a very narrow perspective of history and no longer understand the mechanisms of crimes, which are similar everywhere.

A comparative approach towards teaching about Auschwitz, and thus also the Holocaust and other genocides, encounters various barriers, with three of seemingly major importance:

- a) Using the notion of genocide in current political affairs (referring to a given crime with the term 'genocide' elevates its rank; it makes it – according to many people – more important. It is also often connected with 'victims' bidding', i.e. the sentence *we suffered more* repeated in this context).

---

<sup>149</sup> Questionnaires, including students' responses, are owned by the author.

<sup>150</sup> Here we need to be careful, however, not to get lost or mix knowledge of specific events and mechanisms that are unique to the Holocaust. Overly simple comparisons bring us closer to a dangerous thesis of "a thousand human holocausts", which inevitably promotes its relativisation and may also lead to reducing the significance of the Holocaust.

- b) Genocide affects all aspects of social life, so it should not be studied only from the point of view of history, political studies or law; an inter-disciplinary attitude is crucial here.
- c) Genocidal crimes have taken place within different fields and during different periods of history; finding similarities connecting mass murder, but also presenting the differences, is not easy and requires the knowledge of different fields. A researcher could easily be accused of limited knowledge in one of the compared areas.<sup>151</sup>

Nevertheless, comparing Auschwitz with crimes in other places gives us a global approach and makes it easier to understand very similar criminal processes.

It must be said that we should be careful that knowledge of the causes, mechanisms and results of different crimes does not serve the establishment of some specific hierarchy of genocides – although such a notion is not wholly unfamiliar to politicians or journalists – but instead is used for better recognition of the symptoms and mechanisms, as well as content in the public sphere, which may lead to crimes in modern times, together with the symptoms demonstrating that the stages of such crimes are underway. Comparative researchers should follow the Biblical rule reminding us about the natural human inclination to see *‘the mote in thy brother’s eye’* and ignore *‘the beam in thine own eye’*. Such effects often result from historical motivations (e.g. historical policy), ideologies (left wing/right wing), culture or religion. We need to be aware of this and correct our narratives regarding a given subject when necessary.

This all leads to a few general conclusions forming specific challenges for organisers of visits to the Auschwitz Memorial.

Firstly, a visit may not equal only a tour of the museum. In order for a visit to represent historical value, it has to be supported with previous preparation and subsequent “working through”. It is also necessary to

---

<sup>151</sup> See also: L. M. Nijakowski, *Normalność ludobójstwa*, <http://www.naukaonline.pl/nasze-teksty/nauki-humanistyczne/item/620-normalnosc-ludobojstwa> [accessed: 20.08.2018].

ensure a strong educational impact at the memorial site itself. The growing importance of education in this field suggests the need for extending the “Auschwitz lesson” – initial analysis of the visit should take place immediately after it is finished, onsite; this will make it possible to assess and strengthen not only the knowledge gained, but also the emotions evoked (before they fade away, which unfortunately happens for many people, and rather fast).

Secondly, absolutely crucial meaning is here attributed to the knowledge with which the students leave the Memorial site. For many years, this knowledge was extremely diversified and depended, in the majority of cases, on the pre-existing knowledge of a given visitor to the Museum and through which “filters of memory and identity” they perceived and absorbed this place. Over the last 25 years, we have managed to develop quite a universal message about Auschwitz and, thanks to the efforts and organic work of numerous institutions, Oświęcim has transformed from a place of conflict into a place of co-creating universal memory. This huge potential should be used in a much better way.

Next, more and more people tend to support the thesis that education about Auschwitz should be delivered in a broader context: the context of reasons and mechanisms which led to this specific case of genocide, but also those which have led to other examples of genocide, and which may launch and fuel future crimes. From this perspective, a lesson about Auschwitz should be presented as a fundamental element of education about human dignity and human rights.

The fourth conclusion refers to educational activities conducted based on the memory of Auschwitz which includes not only discovering the history of this place, but also in openly saying where and why evil takes place; in motivating people to make governments react; and to provide support to the victims. Education about Auschwitz, the Holocaust and other crimes is certainly not only about knowledge itself. Knowledge is only the foundation within the process of shaping desired attitudes.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Bartuś, „Wizyta w Auschwitz”, pp. 176–177.

In summary, young people's visits to the former Auschwitz camp should not be limited exclusively to a tour of the Memorial site. Education must here be presented in a broader context, illustrating the reasons and mechanisms behind the Holocaust but also other instances of genocide, and the warning signs that may signify similar crimes in the future.

The lesson at/about Auschwitz should constitute a key element of interdisciplinary education (History, Social Studies, Geography, Polish, foreign languages etc.) regarding human dignity and human rights, while the emotions accompanying this education should be aimed at sensitizing participants, arousing their consciousness and motivation to engage in social activity.

\*\*\*

### **Case study: Example of good practices of combining education about the past with education for the future – project 'Lesser Poland Remembers'**

The project 'Lesser Poland Remembers' was first held in 2016. It consists of a two-day visit by students to the Auschwitz Memorial Site and the town of Oświęcim. The leitmotif of the project consists of questions connected with propaganda and hate speech from both historical and modern perspectives, as these are the words that can launch mechanisms which, over the course of time – and subsequent events – becoming increasingly difficult to stop and which can lead to serious crimes. In this context, it is also crucial to refer to the role of the Internet, which has become the field of numerous activities for teenagers. Students are not always aware of the power of this great medium of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in which they themselves participate.

Co-operation with students is based on multimedia presentations and workshops. Topics discussed include the mechanisms of propaganda used in the Third Reich and during the genocide in Rwanda, as well as in the modern world. Teenagers also visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site as well as the Jewish Centre and synagogue. 42 secondary school

groups from 19 cities and towns in Lesser Poland took part in the project in the years 2016–2018, in total forming a group of 1,010 students.<sup>153</sup>

Additional project objectives consist of developing a study travel model, as well as conducting research on teenagers' contemporary perceptions of Auschwitz.

The visit to the former camp comprises the central point of the groups' stay in Oświęcim. One place of significance has been added to the standard guided tour of the Museum, i.e. entering the children's barrack within the premises of the former KL Birkenau. The fate of children in the camp constitutes an important reference for discussion of children's current situation in regions of warfare and armed conflicts.

The visit to the Memorial site is preceded by a workshop intended to make the life of the Jews in pre-war Oświęcim feel less distant to the students, as in 1939, the Jewish community totalled over half of the town's population.<sup>154</sup> The day is complemented by a visit to the Khevre Loymdei Mishnayos synagogue and the exhibition at the Jewish Centre.

The first day is summarized with a lecture on the role of propaganda in the Nazi era. It presents its mechanisms and consequences, placing them in a broad historical context.

---

<sup>153</sup> The project 'Lesser Poland Remembers' was realized by the Oświęcim Human Rights Institute, the Galeria Książki library in co-operation with the Jewish Centre in Oświęcim, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, and the Foundation for the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim. In 2016, partners in this project also included: The Lesser Poland Teacher Training Centre in Kraków, the Regional Pedagogical Library in Nowy Sącz, the Nomina Rosae Foundation in Nowy Sącz, the Holocaust Research Centre of the Jagiellonian University and – in 2018 – the Regional Pedagogical Library in Kraków. The programme was financed by the Marshal Office of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship.

<sup>154</sup> The first mention of a Jewish settlement in Oświęcim dates back to 1549. Previously, Jewish merchants mostly only passed through the territories of the Duchies of Oświęcim and Zator. Data referring to the pre-war period is of estimative character. According to this data, in 1939, out of 14,000 Oświęcim citizens, 8,200 were Jewish (58.6%). Other sources mention 7,000 Jews. Few of them survived the Holocaust. In May 1945, among the remaining 6,742 Oświęcim citizens, there were only 28 Jews. According to data from June 1945, specified in the residents' report, there were 77 Jews in the town and 186 in September of the same year. Then they began to leave the town of Oświęcim quickly, as they did not find their families or the life they had remembered from before the Shoah there.

Classes scheduled for the second day are concentrated around current issues. They begin with a presentation referring to the essence of human and children's rights, as well as the contribution of Poland and the Poles to shaping international law in this field.<sup>155</sup> This provides the background for discussing the current situation of children in Syria, who remain within the territory of warfare, as well as child refugees coming to Europe. However, a lecture concerning the Poles as refugees during and after the Second World War was introduced in place of this seminar during the second and the third edition of the project.

The next point is a visit to the library in Oświęcim. Students can see the opportunities that the library provides in searching for information about the modern world. Ways of identifying the different sources from which information for the project was taken are also presented. Teenagers also visit the Radio Oświęcim studio, where some groups take part in a live broadcast. This part finishes with visiting a small exhibition that displays the most important documents connected with freedom and human rights.

The third workshop is devoted to presenting the propaganda mechanisms preceding the genocide in Rwanda. The similarity of numerous activities to the propaganda of the Nazi era is shown here.

The fourth workshop, added in the last edition of the project, teaches young people how to differentiate between real news and fake news.

A closing discussion summarizes the two-day visit. It has turned out to constitute a crucial part of the project for all the groups. An open-minded attitude towards sharing views is promoted by the fact that teachers are absent from the seminar. Teenagers have very often initiated difficult discussions. The point that has aroused particularly ardent emotions is the attitude towards Muslims and immigrants, including refugees. A clash

---

<sup>155</sup> Janusz Korczak is among others presented here: founder of the system of co-operation with children based on partnership, independent procedures and institutions, as well as promoting self-education, he was the forerunner of activities in favor of children's human rights). Ludwik Rajchman (one of the founders of UNICEF) and Raphael Lemkin – creator of the notion of genocide and initiator of the convention on punishing the crime of genocide – are also discussed.

of beliefs, often expressed with specific facts yet without any reflection at all, has sometimes resulted in aggressive behaviour.

**Chosen reflections of secondary schools students (aged 16–18) from questionnaires summarizing the 2017 project:**

“We are all human beings and we all have the same rights. There should be no division of those who are better and those who are worse.”

“I realized what propaganda looks like, and how it can be used in order to destroy another human being.”

“In refugees, I see people who need help.”

“The fact of so many people dying at Auschwitz or in Rwanda is, for me, a great source of reflection.”

“I’ve heard something about other genocides for the first time.”

“The most moving aspect for me is that we are all the same, but we can treat other people very badly for racial reasons or because of their religion.”

“I understand what propaganda is and what it can lead to.”

“It was shocking for me to stand in front of the death wall, in the place where prisoners were shot.”

“Everything was not as I thought it would be. I did not imagine that the prisoners lived in such cruel conditions.”

“Propaganda constitutes one of the most dangerous weapons and people manipulated by it are able to commit terrifying things. We need to care for education at its highest level, as educated people do not become stupefied so easily.”

“Desensitization to human suffering and to expressions of racism, nationalism or anti-Semitism may result in huge consequences.”

“I will definitely remember the huge role of propaganda which had an impact on many human decisions. Posters showed ways of controlling people as well as how the fear of otherness may influence human beings and their behaviour.”

“Could the SS men and *kapos* live normal lives? Didn’t they feel what they were doing was bad?”

“I never used to think that propaganda is the introduction to genocide.”

“The huge role of propaganda and its omnipresence has stuck in my memory, as before I was not aware of it at all.”

“I appreciate the work of those who want to open people’s eyes to what really happened during the war and the Shoah. I would like to thank those who make us realize how it all looked and still looks, what propaganda involves, how it functions, as well as warning us against what can happen to people – to us – if we believe unverified information/propaganda and not the truth.”

“The Jews were normal people, interested for example in sport.”

“I saw that tragedies and dramas in the world had very innocent beginnings.”

“I had already been to Auschwitz, but only thanks to these lectures I realized what it all involved.”

“Sometimes it is a good idea to reflect more on what we are doing in our everyday lives.”

“I realized that I should respect all these people more, as we all deserve respect.”

“I saw the results of divisions between people.”

“I remembered how easy it is to convince somebody that a group of people is inferior to us.”

“The workshops made me realize how easy it can be to manipulate society with the use of propaganda and that we should be careful in this aspect.”

“The great power of propaganda and its effects stuck in my mind. Also, that people are very prone to it and are ready to kill others.”

“I will remember the power of propaganda and hate speech.”

“I learnt about the history of the Poles as refugees during the war and saw the cordiality of people from different countries towards the Poles.”

“I will remember the images from KL Auschwitz: the photos of prisoners, their locks of hair, personal belongings, labelled suitcases, the model of a crematorium, the death road, Block number 11, Saint

Maximilian Kolbe's cell, striped uniforms, the history of forced labour, experiments on people, the accounts of those who survived the camp..."

"I will remember how easy it is for a human to deprive another one of dignity."

"Everyone has the right to live. Nobody should decide other people's fates. Everybody should be treated equally."

"I understood that we should check information from many sources in order not to give in to propaganda."

"I learnt not to stay indifferent towards the suffering of other people."

"I will remember the genocide in Rwanda, about which I'd never heard before. But also the problem of the inhuman treatment of the Auschwitz inmates."

"I could not imagine that during World War Two, so many Poles were refugees. I didn't even suppose that something like that had taken place."

"I began to perceive those in need of help in a different way."

"I learnt about the instruments of propaganda and the way in which it can influence ordinary people."

"All these atrocities began in a completely innocent way, often through problems which I can observe in Poland today."

"I was totally unaware of the fact that Poles were refugees during World War Two and that they were received by other countries. Today, I have adopted a different perspective of the situation in Syria."

"The photos of all these little children at Auschwitz stuck in my memory."

Agnieszka Kasperek – Memorial Sites and their Role in Polish Language Teaching with Reference to the Shoah

AGNIESZKA KASPEREK

# Memorial Sites and their Role in Polish Language Teaching with Reference to the Shoah<sup>156</sup>

As a silent witness of the Shoah of European Jews, Poland is a specific guardian of memory of its murdered citizens and their kin from other countries. For this reason, the main role in the shaping of this memory should be played by such state institutions as schools, museums and memorial sites, which are of crucial importance for the process of shaping young citizens' attitudes. Let the importance of the Shoah for modern society and education be proved by the fact that atrocities from the past, which were ignored for years, still resound in society and still require working through. The best place for this seems to be education conducted at authentic memorial sites.

The present article constitutes a fragment of research conducted by the author in the years 2012–2015 within the framework of her doctoral dissertation entitled 'The Category of the Shoah in Schools' Polish Language Teaching Discourse after the Year 2009 (From the Example of Prose by Ida Fink and Irit Amiel)'. Part of the framework of the thesis constituted the question of the role of memorial sites in education about the Holocaust within the framework of Polish language teaching, which is the leitmotif of this article.

---

<sup>156</sup> This article includes fragments of the doctoral dissertation 'The Category of the Shoah in Schools' Polish Language Teaching Discourse after the Year 2009 (From the Example of Prose by Ida Fink and Irit Amiel)' written under the supervision of Professor Sławomir Jacek Żurek and Dr. Piotr Trojański at the Department of Didactics of Literature and Polish Language at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. The thesis was defended on 10 November 2018.

## Research methodology

Empirical studies referring, among others, to the role of memorial sites in Polish language teaching were conducted in 12 schools, including eight middle schools and four secondary schools. The institutions were selected for these studies based on targeted sampling, i.e. the method in which, after the researcher has developed a model of collectivity (based on supposed typical elements of this collectivity), individuals are selected for inclusion in the sample.<sup>157</sup> While developing the model it was taken into consideration that in Poland, in particular the Mazovia and Lublin regions (where the majority of the genocide took place), many schools, especially middle schools, are situated in the vicinity of memorial sites or else their patrons are connected with the subject of the Shoah. They also sometimes conduct their own education programmes about the Holocaust, which undoubtedly influences the level of knowledge on the subject. For these reasons, it was decided that the research would include schools which are in the neighbourhoods of memorial sites (for example, the Majdanek Museum and Memorial Site, or places commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto) and have co-operated with memorial sites or different cultural or educational institutions conducting activities connected with promoting knowledge of the history and culture of Polish Jews. Nevertheless, schools not connected in any way with the studied subject were also invited to take part in this research.

Both quantitative and qualitative research was used with each institution. During sampling, 379 questionnaires filled in by the students were obtained, as well as 351 students' reflective pieces with reference to fragments of works by Fink and Amiel. Additionally, individual in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 students and 17 Polish language teachers.

The role of memorial sites was studied, amongst other methods, through qualitative questionnaires. For both middle and secondary school students, participants were asked if they had visited a memorial site; if yes, then following whose initiative (e.g. of the school, parents,

---

<sup>157</sup> See. J. Sztumski, *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych*, Warszawa, 1984, p. 78.

their own initiative); which place they visited and how much time they spent there. The module 'Memorial Sites and Visits to Them' was, in turn, included in individual in-depth interviews with the students, in which they were asked questions such as:

1. Are there any memorial sites in your city/town?
  - If yes, what are they? Can you list them?
2. Have you ever visited a memorial site devoted to Holocaust victims?
  - If yes, who organised the visit?
3. Did the visit take place in the context of a Polish language lesson and with reference to a set book?
4. What emotions accompanied you in this place?
5. Does your school co-operate with museums and memorial sites?
  - If yes, do you know what this co-operation looks like?
6. If the school does not co-operate with any outside institutions, does it undertake other activities connected with education about the Holocaust (e.g. exhibitions, student exchange programmes, projects)?

The same subjects were included in the interviews with Polish language teachers at middle school and secondary school levels:

1. Are there any memorial sites devoted to Holocaust victims in your city/town?
  - If yes, please list them.
2. Have you and your students taken part in a visit to a memorial site together, organised by the school?
  - If yes:
    - Which classes took part in the visit?
    - How did you prepare your students for this visit?
3. Does the school where you work co-operate with museums and memorial sites?
  - If yes, what does this co-operation look like?
4. If the school does not co-operate with any outside institutions, does it undertake other activities connected with education about the Holocaust (e.g. exhibitions, student exchange programmes, projects)?

## Results

Due to the complex character of this research, the present article presents its results according to school categories. The research was anonymous; the answers provided by all respondents were encoded. The table below shows middle schools taking part in the research:

Table number 1. Middle schools taking part in the research (author's work).

School code	Recruitment criterion
G1	school in the neighbourhood of a memorial site
G2	school in the neighbourhood of a memorial site
G3	school with a patron connected to the subject of research
G4	school with a patron connected to the subject of research
G5	school co-operating with a memorial site or institution involved in education about Jewish culture and history
G6	school co-operating with a memorial site or institution involved in education about Jewish culture and history
G7	school not connected with the subject of research in any of the abovementioned criteria
G8	school not connected with the subject of research in any of the abovementioned criteria

### Middle school

In schools situated in the neighbourhood of memorial sites, co-operation with and visits to museums were held regularly. In G1, all of the students surveyed had been to the memorial site situated in the vicinity of the school. Out of 29 respondents, 23 had gone through the school's initiative. In each case, a visit lasted several hours. As emphasized by the students, it was important for them that they were, for example, taking part in commemorations of anniversaries. "It has to be important to some extent as the transports led to the areas where we live now. And this should be remembered" (G1K1U2).<sup>158</sup> At this school, Polish language teachers were

<sup>158</sup> For the purpose of description of the results, participating students were assigned specific codes (code of the school researched/class code/student's code) as the research was anonymous.

involved in co-operation with the Museum. Even if the History teacher bore the greatest responsibility for this contact, Polish language teachers were also informed on the structure of the co-operation and when the visits were organised. They also prepared students for the visit. Importantly, one of the teachers referred to the following aspect connected with the visits:

G1N2: Hmm, this of course means not to treat this subject by the by. One very important thing I remembered, when we were taking part in the training here, about young people going to memorial sites in general, yes. Bear in mind that when an excursion is planned which involves leaving the school we want to make the most of the opportunity. So, for example, we will go to the theatre at 3 p.m., so first we will visit Majdanek. All the time is filled up. It's shocking how we can first visit Majdanek and then go and see, for example, *The Taming of the Shrew*. But that's how it is, and when I think about it, it's happened many times. We as adults are somehow able to separate the two, but I don't think that the kids, who are 15, 16 or even 17 years old, will feel, you know, that this is something important. And this is what I've learnt, that we absolutely shouldn't treat this subject as a filler. So we must build something to create emotions, I think that if there are emotions, then it'll stay with them, rather than if there are no emotions at all, and it's best when there are many aspects e.g. a multimedia presentation about a figure from history, or about the Holocaust, or an event, some reference from this period, and it'd be good to have something as a continuation, so that they know that it hasn't finished, it's not like it's gone away, and doesn't exist anymore, you know. Or maybe a film referring to this subject, or made by somebody who lived through this. I also show them some documentaries sometimes, usually from Auschwitz or Majdanek. You know, we also had here – but they are very old now, but when I began my work, there were meetings with veterans, but it was on the occasion of 11 November, there was an evening session and a meeting at school, but that was a long time ago and they have since died. We need to make teachers aware that this education is of equal importance as, say, the father of literature, Kochanowski. I don't know if you remember the incident in

Majdanek when some girls took a photo of themselves? So what does it result from? The teachers didn't prepare them, didn't tell them to close their eyes and imagine, for example, that they were naked. Or we enter a barrack and there's a hole in the wall and I tell them, "Imagine it's -40 degrees." Sometimes when it's cold at school they say, "Can we get our jackets?" I tell them, "Kids. What did they eat, roots?" It's abstract for them. When are they hungry? When there's nothing in the fridge. She emphasized that education about the Holocaust never ends and lessons connected with this topic are always of a special character.

In G2 three respondents had never visited a memorial site; the rest of them visited memorial sites near the school and went there on the initiative of the school. The visits always lasted a few hours. The teacher, in turn, stated during the interviews that their organization is a task for the History teachers. She claimed that she never took part in initiatives of this kind; what is more, she was never troubled by this exclusion. The students, in turn, would willingly talk about the trips to memorial sites, but they would emphasize the role of their History teacher in them, expressing their astonishment that visits of this kind could have been considered in the context of Polish language lessons. In addition, one of the students stated that initiatives connected with this subject can be found, in particular, outside the school:

G2U3: I think, because our History teacher invited this elderly man who lives here in the district into our lessons, and he talked about life during the war and about all these actions that they were carrying out, and I think I was the only person during this meeting who was taking notes, and quite meticulously. Because I'm interested in it, though. It seems to me that this was such an opportunity, but I have my other classes at the same time and I can't leave, and so I come to this man in the Centre in Bronowice after school, and I talk with him there, or he gives me some books.

When comparing the two schools, it was clearly visible that even though they were both situated within the vicinity of memorial sites, in the first one all Humanities teachers were involved in co-operation with or trips to memorial sites, whilst in the second, it was considered

the task of History teachers. The Polish language teacher did not even know how and when they were organised.

In one of the schools with a patron, G3, among 48 students surveyed, 32 have visited a memorial site, whilst 16 have never been. In turn, 25 of those surveyed stated that this was on the initiative of the school. They visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the Stutthof Museum. Significantly, places enumerated by the respondents were not those situated closest to the school. At least two of those situated nearby (e.g. Majdanek, Belżec) are known as Holocaust sites all over the world, but they were not mentioned by the students at all. Nobody was able to answer additional questions on institutions connected with the Holocaust in their neighbourhood, or on the involvement of the school's patron in rescuing the Jews, even if such institutions were situated at a distance of only a dozen kilometres from the school and access to them was considered convenient. During the interviews, both Polish language teachers – similarly to the school described above – claimed that trips to memorial sites were organised, but only History teachers were involved in them. They emphasized, however, the fact that they heard that such trips are difficult to organise due to financial and administrative aspects (such as the necessity to comply with the curriculum and the set number of hours). Students from G3 were not able to specify which memorial sites were located in their neighbourhood even if, as previously mentioned, the school is situated on the outskirts of a big city, associated with pre-war life of the Jews and the Holocaust.

A.K. [Agnieszka Kasperek – research author – editor's footnote]: And are there any places in Warsaw where one can go and somehow see or learn something about this period?

G3U3: In the context of the Jews, I don't think so, but there are, for example, kinds of cemeteries, for example Powązki, where there are for example the heroes of the Warsaw Uprising and other soldiers.

They were also not aware of the existence of memorial sites connected with the patron of the school.

In the next institution – G4 – 14 of those surveyed had never visited any memorial site, even if such visits were organised regularly. It was

clearly visible here, however, that the school was attaching great importance to meetings at memorial sites (the opportunity for students to see authentic facilities and objects or meet witnesses of this history). The patron of the school is connected with the Second World War and a memorial room had been established, including various relics of those times: different objects, letters, and memories:

G4U1: So in there we have different memorabilia connected with World War Two, some weapons, they're more army, military-style, I guess we also have some photos and photographs of some people who took part in the Uprising, and in World War Two, but also then fought in the underground after 1945.

Regular meetings with veterans were also organised, which were recalled by the students. Both they and their teachers emphasized the importance of such valuable meetings:

A.K.: (...), and any meetings, I don't know, for example with witnesses?

G4U3: Yes, there were, for example with Mr...Jakubiec and these veterans who are still alive and experienced World War Two.

A.K.: And you think they're good? I mean, these meetings?

G4U3: Yes, I think they're good, as these people who survived the war are still alive. But it's best when those who are alive share their stories, as they watched it all unfold and experienced it, and not just from books. This is my opinion.

In this school, three of the interviewed students mentioned that earlier, during their time at primary school, visits to memorial sites were also organised.

In the first of the schools co-operating with memorial sites, only two of the students surveyed had never visited such a place. The rest had also visited the Jewish cemetery, or rather its remnants, which was situated in the vicinity of the school. It should be emphasized here that in the minds of both the students and teachers, this place was not connected with the remnants of Jewish culture and former inhabitants of the area, but was treated as a site of Holocaust remembrance. The Polish language teacher

even claimed that the students visited this place together with their History teacher and she then went there herself after school, inspired by the students fascinated with the cemetery. G5's head teacher stated co-operation with institutions conducting education about the Jews, but the school itself was not involved in any initiative aimed at taking care of the cemetery. A museum and memorial site was also situated in the vicinity of the school, but the students were not taken there during their classes and none of them declared to have been there for any other reason in the questionnaire, e.g. on the initiative of their family. The teacher surveyed would emphasize many times during the interview that education about the Shoah constitutes the domain and obligation of History teachers. Asked about the possibility of taking care of the cemetery, for example by one of the classes, she responded that Polish language teachers do not have time for such activities and do not know how to organise them. She also stressed the fact that the school will soon celebrate its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but the Jewish community and its influence on the development of the area was totally omitted from the ceremony. It is necessary to add here that the Jewish community, consisting of more than 200 members, used to be situated in that district. In the second school co-operating with a memorial site (G6) only five among those surveyed had never had contact with any memorial sites and the rest visited mainly on the initiative of their families and not of the school. In this institution, in turn, meetings with young people from Israel were organised. According to the teacher, this initiative was necessary as it showed the similarities between people irrespective of their place of residence. At the beginning they talked about history, but then it transpired that they shared common interests and could remain in touch e.g. on Facebook. One of the students claimed:

A.K.: And what do you think, are such students' exchange programmes important or necessary?

G6U1: Yes, as generally it involves getting to know other cultures, what they really look like, and not from information just heard or read, which is not always true, and also this comparison of how it actually looks, the comparison, I don't know...

Asked about visits at the memorial site, the teacher stated that together with students, they visited the Museum and tried to take part in ceremonies, and when the Israeli visitors came, they would also go together to lay flowers. This remained in contradiction to what the students were writing in their questionnaires (with the majority of them visiting this place together with their parents). Two of the students surveyed pointed to the benefits resulting from meeting the students from Israel, but they more strongly stressed the importance of modern times, discovering a new culture and friends from different countries. The topic of the Shoah seemed not to take up an important place during such meetings:

A.K.: And can you tell me how it looked in general, what the attitude was?

G6U2: I mean, we didn't talk about these topics, it was more relaxed, to get to know each other, to practice the language a little, and it was all in this relaxed atmosphere.

One of those surveyed would claim directly that the meeting and visit in Majdanek, together with their guests, were aimed only at showing the school in a good light:

G6U3: The last visit in Majdanek was when those Israeli people came.

A.K.: OK, so there was also a visit together with them?

G6U3: Yes, but in my opinion it was more to show off, to demonstrate how cool the school is. It will be more advertised than showing, I mean maybe this was the intention, to be advertised well. But I've never been there, I mean I've been to Majdanek, but not with the school.

The image of the school co-operating with remembrance institutions created in this way did not exactly match what the students said during the interviews. This may, of course, result from the fact that respondents selected for interviews were not interested in the topics relating to Jews; such judgments can also be influenced by students' personal attitude towards minorities.

It can here be stated that the schools which were generally perceived and would describe themselves as co-operating with the institutions were not always doing it in an appropriate way by using the opportunities

and potential of the institution in the educational process to the fullest. In G5, the place where the school was located and its history was not utilised at all, while in G6, exchange programmes with Israeli students were positively assessed by the teachers, whilst the students didn't perceive them in the category of learning about memory together, but rather of getting to know new friends from other countries and developing their English language skills.

The next two schools – G7 and G8 – were the institutions not involved in the subject. In the first of them, 11 students had never visited a memorial site; the rest had only been to the Museum in Majdanek, situated the closest to the school. The visit took place on the initiative of the school. Students who took part in the survey highlighted the fact that their teacher tried to prepare them for the visit, while in the second, they just “winged it”. One of the students additionally referred to the behaviour during the visit in Majdanek and students' reaction when they saw a group from Israel:

G7U5: It happened that when we were there, there was a Jewish trip, and a lot of people, even...even teachers told us many unpleasant things about the Jews, but they would also tell us how we should behave.

The teacher surveyed did not know many details about the organization of trips to Majdanek, even though she used to be the Head Teacher during the time the survey was conducted:

G7N1: Yes, yes, yes, there are trips to Majdanek, trips to the Warsaw Rising Museum. I'm talking generally here, I don't know if these classes have gone, but I think that yes. We go to the cinema to see *Kamienie*...no...maybe *Miasto 44*... We went there... They also saw *Kamienie na szaniec*, it was filmed, so...Some exhibitions, in our Culture Centre for example, we visit them sometimes.

Unfortunately, she was unable to say precisely how and by whom these trips were organised. The students, in turn, when asked about a memorial site in their neighbourhood, were able to refer to a famous museum within the location of a former concentration camp situated at a distance of several dozen kilometres, but they would also enumerate places connected with the

Second World War, such as, for example, the monuments to fallen soldiers. In the second school, G8, as many as five out of 19 students surveyed had never visited a memorial site. Asked about their visits to memorial sites, both the teacher as well as the students claimed that they were organised, but not preceded by any preparatory lessons. Those surveyed expressed a neutral attitude towards this fact, treating the memorial site as a place permanently inscribed on the map of the place where the school was located. Only one of the students would link the Museum with the municipal cemetery located nearby. As can be seen, in the schools not connected with the subject, trips to memorial sites were organised, but they would take place just like any other trips included in the curriculum. Polish language teachers were usually not involved in such undertakings and were unable to refer to any organizational details.

### Secondary school<sup>159</sup>

The responses of students from secondary schools, where the subject of the Holocaust is included in the curriculum in the first year of education, is presented in the table below:

Table number 2. Students' responses to the question concerning a visit to a memorial site (author's work).

School	Number of respondents who have visited a memorial site, out of the total number of those surveyed	Visit initiator	Place	Visit duration
L1	8 out of 14	School	Auschwitz	A few hours
L2	36 out of 41	School	Auschwitz	A few hours
L3	33 out of 45	School	Majdanek	A few hours
L4	44 out of 54	School	Majdanek	A few hours

<sup>159</sup> L1 – school in the neighborhood of the memorial site, L2 – school co-operating with a remembrance institution, L3 – school with its patron connected to the subject of research, L4 – school not connected to the subject of research.

The results are astonishing, especially for L1 – the school adjacent to a memorial site, where visits should be included in the curriculum, as is the case, for example, in middle schools. Even if, during the interviews, the teachers mentioned the school's special educational programme, the study suggests that this included only the immediate vicinity of the institution (in this case it was the area of the former ghetto):

N1L1: Even if our school has a special module of teaching about the Holocaust due to where we are located. This module consists of three parts. Every teacher is responsible for a different module, I'm in charge of the module 'They Were Our Neighbours', and then we organise a tour of Muranów.

Even though teachers emphasized that such a programme was underway, among the interviewed students there was not a single response indicating that a memorial site is situated in the immediate vicinity of the school. In addition, in L1 and L2, the memorial site visited by the students was not the one located the shortest distance from the school. This allegedly results from the fact that the visit to the memorial site was combined with a school trip to other places that are not connected to the subject of the Shoah. The situation looks different in L3 and L4, where the students did point to the memorial site closest to the school.

When asked about the trips to memorial sites, teachers from L2 claimed that at the moment they do not have time for organising these, as they have to report on each hour devoted to teaching work. They did, however, willingly recall how such trips looked in the past:

A.K.: And could you tell us more about how something like this looks?

L2N1: We usually set off in the morning, in the afternoon we have the first visit, and we usually visit Auschwitz first, and then there are classes, for example about painting, or some other specific topic, for example Hungarian Jews, or any other topics. We have even had the chance to see archival documents. Then the next day is usually visiting Birkenau and there...it is this really thorough, really detailed visit of these places, plus the subject related to it, so for example medicine, or the subject of...children...or, or anything connected with...let's say Canada, or

Borowski's stories, in order, you know, to refer to this topic. This is all done in a really beautiful way. I'm very satisfied with these classes.

In addition, the same respondent expressed her doubts regarding taking younger students, i.e. those from middle schools, to the memorial sites (former extermination/concentration camps):

L2N1: It's very irresponsible that there are groups of middle school students coming, this is the teacher's lack of responsibility. At least that's how I feel it. How can it be...always...A long, long time ago, when I used to go there with young people, we needed to have parents' consent just in case...I would always take those who were already 18. They are 18, but it doesn't mean they're mature enough. But how is it possible to take younger teenagers? This is for me as irresponsible as, for example, taking 4<sup>th</sup> grade pupils to the cinema for the film *Pan Tadeusz*. This shouldn't even be compared like this, but it's more or less for them...you know, what I've seen there, there was a kid doing pull-ups, then...

The quoted response refers to an additional question, namely the age selection of teenagers visiting memorial sites. Here we should also note that this has been referred to and discussed by many researchers and experts in Holocaust education.<sup>160</sup>

In L3, in turn, in the context of visits, the issue of teachers reporting on their working hours also emerged, together with problems connected with leaving the school due to some of the students' places of residence. The school, situated a short distance from the bus station in a big city, was very popular among the students commuting from the outskirts due to its convenient location. These students did not want to visit memorial sites after school, though this was suggested to them. This situation resulted in deepening cultural differences between the students who lived in the city and those commuting from its outskirts:

L3N1: So this is very, very hard and it significantly limited, in my opinion, students' development in these fields, as maybe...those students

---

<sup>160</sup> As of 14 May 2017, the age recommended for a visit at the memorial site is 14 years. Cf. Basic information before a visit at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site, <http://auschwitz.org/zwiedzanie/podstawowe-informacje/> [accessed: 14.05.2017].

who are from more, let me say, “intelligentsia” families, with stimulated needs, you know, to take part in cultural life, with the awareness that they want to see something, then they take part together with parents, you know, and here...the students’ environment is very often based on what the school has to show. Because a student from a small village, 14 kilometres from Lublin, won’t come with their parents to the theatre here, will they? Their parents won’t take them to the Castle, to an exhibition, so what they’ve seen, it’s very often connected exclusively with the school. Maybe later, further on...

A.K.: OK, but it is somehow their own decision, I mean how they have been shaped before...

L3N1: Yeah, and now it’s very limited. Even if in the curriculum, you know, these contexts are very broad.

Asked how the school faced such challenges, the teacher surveyed said that it co-operated with the institutions, but not at the same level as before 2012. Co-operation has been limited to a minimum and connected only with the closest museum, and this is only in the context of multi-cultural attitudes and the history of the district where the institution is located. Thus, there has not been enough time for a visit at the memorial site:

L3N1: We co-operate with the Open Air Village Museum in Lublin as much as we can. It is some programme called “multiculturalism”, where first-year students are those who go there one day for a visit to, you know, different Centres, you know, connected with multiple cultures in our city. We co-operate with the Castle, with the Pod Zegarem (Under the Clock) Martyrology Museum. This co-operation exists. And we also take part in workshops and some museum lessons, but compared to what was before, it is limited.

A surprising response was provided in L4 to the question concerning visits at memorial sites and co-operation with local institutions:

A.K.: Now I’d like to ask if in the school there are some...does the school co-operate with any memorial institutions? Do you organise any excursions?

L4N1: It isn't the school, it's every teacher on their own. Individually. I do organise these. But then, there is a problem: reporting on the hours, as it's extra-curricular. I used to go out with my students, and for me it's easy to go to Grodzka Gate, to the NN Theatre, and we would go to Majdanek for Holocaust Memorial Day, and we have museum lessons at the Czechowicz Museum, but as far as I know, others don't, as there's a problem with curriculum hours and so it's always to the detriment of something else. Polish is only four hours.

It can thus be concluded that the Head Teacher did not provide assistance in organizing such excursions and was sometimes reluctant to encourage these kind of activities. In a later part of the interview, where respondents were asked about training, the teacher said that she can take part only in those which are organised during summer holidays, as otherwise the Head Teacher would not give her consent. For this reason she could not, for instance, apply to Yad Vashem to take part in teachers' training, as she would have been forced to go on two-week unpaid leave for this purpose.

## **Summary**

It can be concluded from the studies presented above that in middle schools, students visited memorial sites, usually those situated closest to their town or city. However, they were not prepared enough by the school prior to such visits. There were no discussions with the teacher concerning the specific character of the place where they were going, and the summary after the visit itself or sharing their reflections were absent as well. Due to the limited number of hours available, the teachers would most often omit this important element of the educational process. The interviews and observations show that these visits to memorial sites do not meet the assumed objectives; they are usually treated as an excursion combined with another, more attractive event or place. The schools rarely decided to go only to a memorial site.

At the middle school level, there was no co-operation between the teachers of different subjects, e.g. Polish language and History, which

results in visits being carried out without the student's preparation in advance, and no time is devoted to a summary discussion afterwards. It can be claimed that the Polish school system tends to forget about the specific character of memorial sites (in particular those situated within post-camp premises) as well as about the fact that a visit there can constitute an emotionally difficult experience for students.

In secondary schools, all those surveyed highlighted the advantages of visits to memorial sites and of co-operation with institutions involved in remembrance education. This made it possible to see authentic places, which influenced the students to a larger extent. Nevertheless, in all of the schools there was concern that, because of the system of assigning and reporting on teaching hours, it was impossible to organise such excursions. In some schools, the problem of the Head Teacher's attitude towards such initiatives also emerged.

Starting from the 2017/2018 school year, a structural and curricular reform of the Polish educational system was again carried out in Poland, assuming the return to the system of eight-year primary school and four-year general secondary school education. It is possible that such a division will make it easier to organise visits to memorial sites for teenagers, and co-operation between Polish language and History teachers will be possible thanks to the chronological arrangement of the content taught. In the field of education about the Holocaust, the perspective of the country where the education takes place is, of course, important, but it is necessary to remember that the crucial aspect consists of six million people being murdered, which is in itself an important fact in the modern world. Thus, the choice of cultural content and approaching this aspect from different perspectives should also be considered. For this reason, an appropriately prepared and conducted visit to an authentic memorial site should constitute an indispensable element of education taking place at school.

**PART 3:**

**Good Practices**

ADAM MUSIAŁ

## An Online Lesson Preparing for a Visit to the Auschwitz Memorial: The Authors' Reflections and Remarks<sup>161</sup>

When setting about the task of creating an online lesson that would prepare teenagers (and young adults) for a visit to the Auschwitz Memorial, we faced the necessity of determining our pedagogical objectives. Despite our long practical teaching experience in working with teenage students (or perhaps thanks to it), we spent some time discussing our goals, as we knew we needed to be absolutely certain what we wanted to achieve. These talks confirmed that we were unanimous in our aims, having debated similar issues and posed similar questions before. We simply knew we had to make sure we implemented the goals of our lesson as best as we could.

The lesson is designed to prepare young people for a visit to a memorial site, one that is laden with complex and difficult historical content. Yet this very preparation begs the obvious question: why visit memorial sites in the first place? What, if any, is their educational value? How can such visits stimulate the educational process and how might students benefit from them? And if/when one has decided in favour of such visits, how should one prepare students for an experience of this kind?

---

<sup>161</sup> The lesson was created by two teachers, Monika Witalis-Malinowska and Adam Musiał, from the *Zespół Szkół Ogólnokształcących Społecznego Towarzystwa Oświatowego* in Kraków, as part of the project 'The Future of Auschwitz and Holocaust Education in Authentic Memorial Sites'. It can be downloaded from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum's website: [http://lekcja.auschwitz.org/31\\_przygotowanie\\_do\\_wizyty\\_pl/](http://lekcja.auschwitz.org/31_przygotowanie_do_wizyty_pl/) [accessed: 10.05.2019].

As schoolteachers and educators, we believe in the value of visits to remembrance sites and their potential to enhance the quality of historical education. The benefits of such visits lie, first of all, in the authenticity of memorial sites, which are direct reminders and representations of the history that happened there, as well as material witnesses of the story they simultaneously conceal and reveal. A memorial site can also be a reminder, representation and witness thanks to its tangibility: the past it encapsulates is palpable, manifested and evident in its location, topographic features and material artefacts. Finally, visits to memorial sites often prove to be very personal experiences, mostly due to their great emotional charge, but also owing to their sensual dimension, as memorial sites affect visitors' visual and aural, and sometimes even their olfactory and tactile, perceptions.

Of course, the emotional charge of a memorial site must be handled carefully. Shocking visitors with graphic images of terror must be avoided or at least minimised, as an educator's aim should be to use the visitors' emotions, impressions and feelings stirred up by historical artefacts for pedagogical means and not as a goal in itself. Yet though "the deliberate maintenance of a state of emotional agitation is unacceptable," "a total exclusion of the affective sphere in such historical places as former concentration camps [...] would transform close contact with historical events [...] into a kind of a 'chemical analysis', and would consequently obstruct the development of empathy."<sup>162</sup>

All three educational assets of visits to memorial sites – authenticity, tangibility and the possibility of a personal experience – can strengthen the cognitive and pedagogical process of education. To put it somewhat metaphorically, visitors often feel that the remembrance site they are visiting speaks to them, and in places of such liminal and extreme historical experience as Auschwitz, the awareness

---

<sup>162</sup> T. Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci. Zarys problematyki*, Lublin 2002, p. 62.

of pain is more acute. The silent, traumatic past in such places seems to scream. Yet the volume of that scream, or its audibility in the first place, depends on the awareness of the past one has come to explore at the remembrance site.

The awareness of the past, in turn, depends on the knowledge one has acquired about the place. One will not hear the history, even in places full of artefacts – those silent reminders of the past, like in Auschwitz – if one is not aware of the past that happened there and how it happened. This is particularly true of remembrance sites where hardly any or virtually no artefacts, no infrastructure and no physical reminders have been preserved, such as at Treblinka or Sobibór.

Unlike regular school education, education at memorial sites is a one-off learning event, even if conducted through an extended study visit. Thus, despite the significant characteristics of remembrance sites mentioned above, the key drawback of this experience is that it lacks the possibility of the long-term systematic didactic impact found at school. Therefore, as significant as the educational value and potential of a visit to a memorial site is, it depends upon regular school education for equipping student visitors with the knowledge of the past they are to touch at the memorial site and for developing an awareness of the authenticity of that place.

When starting to create our lesson, rather than keeping the content relatively short, as initially planned by the International Centre for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust, we intended to provide sufficient knowledge to students by explaining in a lucid and well-structured way what Auschwitz was:

- what happened there and why it was established, which we expound in the introduction to the lesson and in the section on Auschwitz as a concentration camp;
- of what it was a consequence and what processes and ideology led to it, and, finally, what those processes and ideology were, what made them happen and develop, how they were implemented and how they operated, which we explain in the section on Nazism.

In other words, we wanted to ensure that by the time students come to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, they will hopefully have acquired sufficient knowledge to *perceive it as a consequence of a series of events that led to its creation and understand the cause-and-effect relationship between these events*. We wished to make students know sufficiently enough *for the silent past of this place to speak to them*, so that all the artefacts – the barracks, the gates, the *Appelplatz*, the ramp and the gas chambers and crematoria – could be meaningful to students when they visit them, or, to put it more poetically, so that those students could hear the scream of the silent past of the place.

At the same time as trying to achieve these aims, we wanted to meet the preliminary pedagogical, methodological and cognitive goals of a meaningful visit to a memorial site. Looking at this from a different perspective, it could be said that we wished to prevent situations where teachers come with their students, completely unprepared, for a *trip to Oświęcim*, rather than an educational visit to the Auschwitz Memorial, about which we have both heard more than once.

In order to meet the above-mentioned goals, we realised that our lesson must have a clear structure, facilitating the understanding of its content. We decided to base the skeleton of our lesson on the official definition of Auschwitz-Birkenau, as a *German Nazi concentration camp and extermination centre*, and focus on explaining the following in the main part of our lesson:

- what Nazism was: its ideology and constituent elements; the causes of its emergence; the takeover of power by the Nazis in Germany; the restriction of democracy and liquidation of political opponents; the limitation of Jews' living space; and the effects of Nazi propaganda;
- Auschwitz as a concentration camp: the appearance of Dachau and other concentration camps and the reasons behind this; the reasons for establishing Auschwitz as a concentration camp; and the reality of KL Auschwitz;
- Auschwitz as an extermination centre.

Additionally, we included what is actually a separate lesson in its own right and what we called *Reflection on Auschwitz*. We deem it absolutely necessary and indispensable to subject the cognitive and educational content of a visit to the Auschwitz Memorial to reflection in order to place it within the long-term educational process started and continued at school. Furthermore, we think it is necessary to refer the educational experience of the visit to today's world (which will be discussed shortly), and, last but not least, let the students express their emotions and discuss them.

In addition to numerous photographs and maps, we use a considerable number of video testimonies and excerpts from film documentaries in our lesson. The use of those materials, mostly from the resources of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and the USC Shoah Foundation, was designed to offer a chance for an indirect, vicarious meeting with those who lived through Auschwitz, and was meant to be an intimate encounter with the suffering of this place, allowing students to take a closer look.

There are thus testimonies of survivors depicting the growing terror of Jewish life under Nazism in pre-war Germany: the transformation of the world as they knew it, virtually overnight, into a hostile reality. There are also testimonies portraying the reality of KL Auschwitz: the transformation from arrivals into prisoners, inmates' clothes, their living conditions, the brutal treatment by the SS and functionary prisoners, grueling work, food and hunger, diseases and pseudo-medical experiments.

The use of video testimonies of various survivors was meant to re-humanise their dehumanising experience in a faceless place; to bring back their names and impart an individual dimension to what was planned and executed as a mass experience, so that survivors' individual fate and their emotions could be placed against the backdrop of the larger history of this site. Moreover, survivors' video testimonies were intended to make the knowledge acquired by students more tangible and palpable – to let students touch and sense more, and thus understand better.

Our lesson requires some preliminary interest in the subject on the teacher's part, or at least a certain degree of openness to find out more

about it. We both believe that a teacher willing to take their students for a visit to a remembrance site, especially one so charged with high-calibre meaning as Auschwitz, should ideally know the place themselves.

Ideally, the teacher will have:

- domesticated and structured the place cognitively beforehand,
- internalised its importance, its meaning and message,
- processed the emotions it can stir,
- and definitely determined the goals of the visit (why they want to familiarise their students with the place) – goals that are not only cognitive.

From the very beginning, the cognitive dimension of our lesson was to be subordinated to its other, ethical, dimension. Just like in general Holocaust or genocide education, the cognitive function of our lesson, its factual foundation, is meant to be auxiliary, instrumental and utilitarian in fulfilling its ethical function. The factual serves the ethical, so that history can truly be *magistra vitae*, life's teacher.

We both believe as educators that if history is to be useful in teaching students about life, then it must teach them to pose and consider important questions and reach conclusions that could be applicable today and implemented for the betterment of the world (with all due respect to the rather narrow circle of professional academic historians who study the vicissitudes of history for their own sake, and for the benefit of their readers). In other words, the aim of history is to educate critically thinking citizens of the modern world who wish to learn from the mistakes of their predecessors and ancestors, and from the human potential to do evil, and who will decide to do the exact opposite by being open-minded and accepting. Our main goal as educators, and especially Holocaust and genocide educators, is to do exactly this: to shape our students into tolerant, accepting, open-minded people who will themselves be active in designing a better world.

From the very start, therefore, we knew that the lesson must have clear ethical content, because the cognition of historical facts serves to

pose a number of important questions about human nature, its positive and negative sides, both the commendable and the reprehensible. Historical facts also – or at least should – let students ask vital questions and reach conclusions about the present day. We thus pose such questions in our lesson and request students to make references to today, for instance, in the subsections on the causes of the rise of Nazism and the restrictions on democracy.

The main part of the ethical content of our lesson, however, can be found in its final section, *Reflection on Auschwitz*, constituting something of a separate lesson. One of the key questions that we thought had to be asked after the visit was about the lessons that the history of Auschwitz can teach us about today and for today; what message it carries.

Let us lend an ear to two survivors, whose testimonies have been included in *Reflection*: Henia Goldman, a Jewish Polish Holocaust survivor, originally from Sądowa Wisznia, and Elie Wiesel, originally from Sighetu Marmăției, or Máramarosziget (the Romanian and Hungarian renditions of the place name), a former prisoner of Auschwitz, and subsequently a writer and Holocaust educator.

When asked by the interviewer about her message for posterity at the end of her testimony, Henia Goldman says that she feels “only *education* can help” and that we “have to be *aware* [of] what is happening now, anywhere else” if we want to “build a better world to come, because man is capable of terrible things.” She also mentions the general public’s *responsibility* to stay vigilant against signals and symptoms of danger.<sup>163</sup>

Elie Wiesel, in a similar vein, speaks of the danger of indifference:

I think the greatest source of evil and danger in the world, to the world, is *indifference*. I’ve always believed that the opposite of love is not hate, but *indifference*; the opposite of art is not

---

<sup>163</sup> USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, testimony of Henia Goldman, Interview Code: 7094, tape 7094 04 V01 5000000002213595.

ugliness, but *indifference*; the opposite of life is not death, but *indifference* to life and death; the opposite of peace is not war, but *indifference* to peace and war (...)<sup>164</sup>

Henia Goldman, therefore, names education, the vehicle of disseminating knowledge, as the key to developing awareness.<sup>165</sup> For it is thanks to knowledge that one acquires an awareness of what is happening around us, and consequently is able and willing to respond to any signals of malevolence and evil as a conscious citizen that feels some responsibility for humanity. Thanks to knowledge and awareness, as well as bearing responsibility for the shape of the world, individuals will hopefully take a stance against any wrongdoing, following Elie Wiesel's message, and refrain from indifference.

Both survivors' messages, as well as Martin Niemöller's famous poem (about the importance of protesting, standing up to and taking a stance against evil lest you are left alone to your own devices, with no one to come to your rescue) summarise our objectives in creating our lesson. We do believe that the value of visits to remembrance sites such as the Auschwitz Memorial cannot be overestimated, yet their educational and pedagogical efficiency and success greatly depend on the students' degree of preparation, i.e. how much they know and how much they are aware of beforehand. This can hopefully be achieved thanks to our lesson.

---

<sup>164</sup> *A Portrait of Elie Wiesel: In the Shadow of Flames*, a documentary film by Elie Wiesel; Samuel Bak; WHY (Television station: Philadelphia, Pa.); PBS Video, 1980.

<sup>165</sup> Interestingly, the etymologically Germanic word *aware* goes back to Old English *gewær* and Old German *waro*, meaning "cognizant, watchful" (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aware>; accessed 29.10.2018). Similarly, the synonymous word *conscious*, of Latin origin, goes back to *com-* ("with" or "thoroughly") and *scire* ("to know"), stressing "knowledge" as the other important aspect of both words (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscious>; accessed 29.10.2018). Also, the Polish equivalents, *świadomy* and *świadomość* (adjective and noun respectively) contain the core of *wiadomy* ("known") and *wiadomość* ("information, knowledge").

GABRIEL DITTRICH

## “Education with a View to the Future”: The Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk Project

Since 1993, young people and employees from Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk have been contributing to the maintenance of the Memorial Site at the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp.

### **The creation of the association ‘Teaching for the Future’**

Following the massive racist attacks between 22–26 August 1992 on the Central Reception Centre for Asylum Applicants and the home of former Vietnamese contract workers in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, right-wing extremism – which had been present since the Second World War – once again became a topic of discussion in Germany.

Several hundred right-wing radicals and up to 3,000 passive observers took part in the riots. At the height of the conflict, the police withdrew completely for a while and left the victims locked in a burning house, helpless on their own.

Now, as before, there are attacks on centres for asylum seekers and everything related to foreigners, as well as on socially marginalised people.

In an effort to respond appropriately to the atmosphere of open xenophobia that developed in reunited Germany at the beginning of 1990, the association ‘Teaching for the Future – The Association for the Maintenance of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Children’s Barrack’ (in German: *Verein ‘Für die Zukunft lernen-Verein zur Erhaltung der Kinderbaracke Auschwitz-Birkenau’*) was founded in 1993.

Participants from the Youth Centre in Rostock-Lichtenhagen, the young people and their care workers from the Social Welfare Youth Organisation of the Rostock region in Graal Müritz have been a permanent part of the group for many years, which travelled to Poland as part of the project together with young people from Breisach and the surrounding area.

As was the case 25 years ago, youth welfare institutions still have to intensify their awareness of this phenomenon today: a growing number of young people support extreme right-wing views, and often manifest them through their external appearance. Many young people want to provoke others, argue (out of ignorance), cannot or do not want to learn from the history of our country, because they have experienced their own life histories as repulsive, negative but also, to some extent, attractive.

To effectively counteract this development, Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk in Breisach-Oberrimsingen, in conjunction with the Catholic University of Freiburg, developed the project 'Teaching for the Future' 25 years ago. The representative of this undertaking is the Association for the Protection of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Children's Barrack, founded in 1993 by the Catholic University of Freiburg and Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk.

Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk, the youth welfare centre of the Caritas Association for the Archdiocese of Freiburg, focuses on education as a way for young people to participate in our society. Young people receive guidance on how to achieve constructive conflict resolution in difficult situations and how to plan their lives in a way that is compatible with existing and accepted norms and principles. The goal is to connect participants involved in the project with tomorrow's tasks by offering them a broad range of educational opportunities.

Through innovative and participatory concepts, young people can face the challenge of taking responsibility for themselves and others. The institution increases their available potential, promotes skills in the direction of constructive relationship building, and transfers values, norms, knowledge and methods of problem-solving.

In addition to education in housing communities, training at our Educational Centre and a secondary vocational school (in German: *Werk-realschule*), and training in seven professions, the Jugendwerk offers individual educational support both in the country and abroad, as well as a distance learning school for primary and middle school students and support for municipalities.

Furthermore, in recent years the institution has adapted all offers to the special needs of minor refugees without guardians in the city of Freiburg.

Aside from the project ‘Teaching for the Future’, young people from Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk can also participate in the project ‘Build and Go on Pilgrimage’ – implemented on the Way of St. James route in Spain. In the vicinity of Astorga, in the north-west of Spain, the youth can initially collaborate on various building projects. So far, they have built, among others, shelters and rooms for young people on the St James route or have restored to them to an appropriate condition. After the construction phase, the participants either go on foot or cycle to Santiago de Compostela. Familiarisation with different cultures and joint efforts on the St James Route help to build mutual trust. The goal is not just to arrive in Santiago, but also to overcome personal boundaries.

The ‘Teaching for the Future’ project is aimed mainly at socially neglected and right-wing youth who are not included in the “standard” education system. The discussion of issues related to German fascism; encounters with historical “authentic places”, witnesses of history, and victims of Nazism; and the conservation works at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum constitute a kind of educational approach, and an example of what the “school can do” to raise awareness and counter-act violence. The project should be understood as a political education offer. Since Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk has been caring for unaccompanied refugee minors for years, it also allows them to participate in trips to Oświęcim. It is essential that young people learn about German history, especially the Second World War and the Holocaust, if

they want to become part of our society. Minors from a Muslim cultural background and a warring country come to us with a different awareness of the State of Israel and anti-Semitism. For this reason, it is important that they understand our society, and if they decide to stay with us, we should not prevent them from learning about the Holocaust.

Since 1993, the project has been taking place at the Auschwitz Museum. It provides an opportunity to familiarise oneself with the history of National Socialism and also allows young people to obtain answers to numerous questions. Every year, young people – not only from Christophorus Jugendwerk – together with interested adults and students of the Catholic University, visit Oświęcim for a few days to learn about the history of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum through work aimed at maintaining the Memorial Site, as well as through conversations with witnesses of history and guided tours of the Museum.

Along with the implementation of the project, the Association, in accordance with its objective, has assumed patronage over the children's barrack at the Auschwitz II-Birkenau site, which is in disrepair, and also ensured its professional restoration. Since then, the project has been included in the official tour of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site.<sup>166</sup>

## **Description of 'Teaching for the Future'**

### **The project participants**

During the stay in Poland, a group of up to four young people are accompanied each year by two employees of Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk to provide them with meaningful educational support. Furthermore, the participants also include at least two students of the Catholic University in Freiburg. For a year now, the group has consisted of a total of eight to 14 people.

---

<sup>166</sup> More information about the project and the Association is available at [www.fuer-die-zukunft-lernen.de](http://www.fuer-die-zukunft-lernen.de) [accessed: 25.05.2019].

## Preparation

The project attaches great importance to voluntarism. Young people from Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk interested in taking part in the project can express such a desire to their mentors or those responsible for the project. A preliminary meeting is held a few weeks before the planned trip to Poland, during which the project is presented along with the daily programme, and interested parties can get to know each other. In a common group, they successively share, among other things, the reasons why they want to go to Auschwitz and what they know about it. The issue of participation in conservation work at the Memorial is also discussed with all participants. They then have the opportunity to consider whether they still want to go to Poland.

Then, a meeting is held a few days before the trip, during which all organisational issues are discussed, such as the departure from Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk, the 12-hour journey, and the stay at the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim. It is very important that all participants declare in writing their readiness to implement the project programme.

## The project programme

### Day one:

#### Journey to Oświęcim

Initially, when the project was implemented, the participants travelled by train from Breisach to Oświęcim. The journey took up to 24 hours. Later on, to improve driving comfort, the group travelled on a small bus overnight. For some time now, the journey to the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim has taken place during the day, and the whole journey takes about 12 hours.

### Day two:

#### Programme in Oświęcim

Late morning: A tour of the town of Oświęcim and the Jewish Centre

Afternoon: A tour of the former site of the KL Auschwitz I Main Camp

Evening: Reflections

**Day three:**

Late morning: Guided tours of the former Auschwitz II-Birkenau death camp

Afternoon: Workshop

Evening: Reflections

**Day four:**

Late morning: Conservation works at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum

Afternoon: Workshops and the opportunity to visit the national exhibitions at the Auschwitz I Main Camp

Evening: Reflections

**Day five:**

Trip to Wieliczka (salt mine), and then Kraków, including a tour of the Old Town

**Day six:**

Trip to Kraków and the former administrative building of Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory, followed by a visit to Kazimierz – the former Jewish district of Kraków.

**Day seven:**

Late morning: Conservation works

Afternoon: Workshop

**Day eight:**

Late morning: Conservation works

Afternoon: Workshop and evaluation of Part I of the project

**Day nine:**

Late morning: A ceremony at the Birkenau children's barrack

Afternoon: Evaluation of Part II of the project, followed by the return trip home

**Day ten:**

Arrival at Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk

**The most important points of the programme:**

**Tour of the grounds of the former Auschwitz I Main Camp and Auschwitz II-Birkenau**

The experience gathered over the years regarding visits to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum by various groups has proven that it is imperative to organise a special guided tour of the Memorial for participants of the 'Teaching for the Future' project. The majority of young people participating in the project are the charges of the Child and Youth Welfare Association and Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk in Breisach-Oberriisingen. It applies to young boys who are in a difficult social and personal situation. In previous years, the project's participants were increasingly reinforced by young people who came to Germany as unaccompanied refugee minors. They are mainly people from war-affected areas in Africa and South-West Asia, predominantly Muslims. A new tour concept had to be developed for young people as well as for those from Germany, taking into consideration the children of migrants growing up in Germany and residing in the home of the Child and Youth Welfare Association. For years, we have taken efforts to ensure that the guided tour of the Memorial Site is conducted by the same guide. Such a person (in this case, a teacher from a Polish vocational school) is informed about the group, knows the issues that young people face, and also closely co-operates with the project supervisor. During the guided tour, which takes place in two tour rounds, each of which lasts four hours, the guide is in constant contact with both supervisors. The participants should have sufficient time to familiarise themselves with

the subject matter. However, they often need more time to assimilate all of it. Due to their inadequate education, social constraints and lack of knowledge of the migrant language, the tour guides must use simple language and, above all, be patient.

Before the visit to the Memorial, an understanding is reached with the participants that if someone is unable or unwilling to take part in the guided tour, he/she shall report to their guardian, who shall discontinue the tour and take care of him/her. The guide shall also be informed of this fact. Young people have the opportunity to see the rest of the Memorial as part of their visit to the national exhibitions, to make up for this.

A very important part of the project is a detailed tour, which includes the children's barrack and the premises of the women's camp in Birkenau because it played a fundamental role in the fate of children in Auschwitz. A particularly emotional moment for young people from the Child and Youth Welfare Association, who are themselves in a difficult social situation, is getting to know the history of the children's barrack. They often remember their childhood in areas affected by war. Afterwards, everyone realises how important it is that the renovation of this barrack was possible thanks to the financial support of Germany and that, among other things, the paintings on the walls of the barrack could be preserved thanks to the help of an institution that cares for young people. It is something of which they are proud. Another emotional moment is when the guide showing the group around Birkenau, who is familiar with the project objectives, leaves enough time for the participants to have some time to themselves.

### **Visit to national exhibitions**

In the afternoon, after conservation works, the participants can visit the national exhibitions. They all spend plenty of time in Block 27, which has an exhibition dedicated to the Shoah. Those with a migrant background often find it easier to understand displays in English rather than a guided tour in German.

### Conservation works

One autumn morning, after more than 20 sacks of leaves were collected from the area of the former crematoria II and III in Birkenau during “conservation” works, one of the participants said with amazement that “if we do not do this, in a few years’ time it will be impossible to see anything”.

The issue of conservation work is addressed and clarified during the preliminary meeting in Germany. At first, they don’t quite get it. They only learn what is expected of them when the Museum employees assign work to them. Work conducted in the early years of the project included tasks such as the removal of excess soil from the camp roads or the latrine in Birkenau, whereas at the moment most of the work being carried out is gardening work.

**In subsequent years, project participants have undertaken, among others, the following tasks:**

They repeatedly removed leaves and dry branches from the roads in the former Auschwitz I Main Camp, cleaned drains and gutters, as well as cleaned and cared for the cleanliness of the roads in the Auschwitz II-Birkenau site. As part of the conservation works, the windows in one of the blocks in the main camp, without exhibitions, were also cleaned and the hedges in both camps trimmed. All relevant renovation work was communicated by the participants during the evaluation rounds and in the documentation.

The cleaning of Zyklon B cans left a great impression on the participants. During this work, they were given the task of searching for specific serial numbers to determine more precisely when the cans were delivered to Auschwitz and when they were eventually “used”.

In 2018, the group experienced a very emotional meeting while working in the main camp near crematorium I. Three young people from migrant families with wheelbarrows were asked by an elderly man they encountered on the way with a yarmulke on his head, who introduced himself as a Londoner, why they were doing this work. After a brief presentation of the project and a clarification of their contribution to the preservation

of the Memorial, one of the minors, who like the others was a Muslim, responded: “To ensure that this never happens again”. With tears in his eyes, the man shook hands with the young people and went on.

Over the 25 years of the project, participants have often been asked by visitors to the Memorial why they undertake such work in Auschwitz. Towards the end of the project, they were asked whether their conservation work was worthwhile. Just as the participants are different, so are their answers, e.g.:

– *[It’s] very sensible, because the whole area would be littered with even more leaves now.*

– *The work was awesome.*

– *It was a kind of liberation/purification of the mind.*

– *It was fun.*

### **Conversation with a witness of history**

In recent years, it has become increasingly difficult to talk to witnesses of history, yet it has always been a part of the project. The list of survivors that our participants have had the opportunity to talk to is extensive. In the years in which, as a result of health reasons, not many witnesses of history were able to meet with the young people, video recordings from previous visits were screened. The conversation with Henryk Mandelbaum was a very touching experience for the project and its participants. He once summarised his involvement, especially through conversations with young people, as follows: “I’m glad I still have the strength to tell the story of this hell. The dead endured all of it. They live among us if that’s what we talk about. Through stories about them, they continue to live among us. They thank us. They receive life thanks to us. There’s nothing more we can do for them”.<sup>167</sup> Henryk Mandelbaum died on 17 June 2008, five weeks after talking to the participants of the project. We all remember to this day the words “My dears...” he often used at the beginning of the conversation.

---

<sup>167</sup> Quote from the project documentation for ‘Teaching for the Future’ (2008).

### **Visit to the Schindler Factory**

Ever since the city of Kraków transformed the area of the former Schindler factory into a museum and organised a permanent exhibition there, about Kraków during the German occupation, the visit to Schindler's Factory has become a permanent element of the programme. Since the exhibition titled 'Kraków – Period of Occupation 1939–1945' is not only about Oscar Schindler, visits to this place are very valuable for the groups. It is worth mentioning that the participants have very little knowledge about the Second World War. The stay at the Museum, combined with a visit to the former Jewish district of Kazimierz and the site of the former ghetto, helps them to understand, to a large extent, what happened.

### **Celebrations at the children's barracks**

On the last day, shortly before departure, all the participants go to Birkenau and, for the last time, visit the children's barrack in the so-called women's section. Since the Association for the Protection of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Children's Barrack is also under the patronage of the project, the children's barrack is a very important and emotional experience for young people. During the ceremony, as the programme item is called, a text is read aloud, which consists of fragments of accounts by former prisoner Eulalia Kurdej.

At the end of the celebration, all the participants receive roses, with which they walk silently along the path to place them where they believe is (most) appropriate. Everyone is given as much time as they need. With this gesture, the project group reveres the memory of the victims and has the opportunity to say goodbye to the place and its history.

### **Educational offer of the International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim**

The project group continues to participate in various pedagogical offers of the International Youth Meeting Centre. Depending on the dynamics of the group and the presentation of the story by a survivor, however, this can sometimes be dispensed with. The project supervisors then work in small groups or individually with young people.

### **Workshop: 'Imagining Otherwise' (Paper and Paint)**

The workshop 'Imagining Otherwise' has been a permanent element of educational work during the implementation of the project 'Teaching for the Future' from almost the very beginning.

After visiting the former Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau camps, the participants are asked to depict in a drawing, what has moved them the most and what has had the strongest impact on them. Project participants are given plenty of time, paint and paper and are then required to commit to paper what they consider important. Then, everyone briefly presents and explains their drawing. All paintings are included in the project documentation.

### **'Look Closely' - Photography seminar**

The project 'Look Closely', carried out during the visit to Oświęcim, was part of the summary of the stay at the Memorial Site. The seminar was the main point of the visit, which took place in Poland between 17–25 August 1996. The participants were asked, after a few days of getting acquainted with the history of the Memorial, to photograph what struck them the most and made a great impression on them. The photographs taken do not refer either to the present-day Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum or its past, but constitute their perspective on the remains of the concentration and extermination camp. Out of the plethora of photographs, the authors of several photos was selected, which were later published in the form of a book. Each selected photo was also titled by the participant. Upon their return from Oświęcim, all the photographs appeared in an album entitled *Look Closely – Young People Look at Auschwitz*, which was issued by a publishing house in Lambertus, Breisgau. The publisher dedicated the album to a former prisoner, Stanisław Cienicali, who talked about his experiences during numerous meetings with young people, including the participants of 'Teaching for the Future'. His unremitting concern was to share his experiences with young people.

All the photographs could be seen in various places during a temporary exhibition, e.g. at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, the German

Caritas Association in Freiburg, Rostock City Hall, the Jewish community in Rostock, the Catholic University in Freiburg and many other cities.

### Thematic films

Often, at the request of the participants, a film about the Holocaust is shown during one of the evenings. In recent years, in connection with the visit to Kraków, participants have been able to watch *Schindler's List* in the Kazimierz district in Podgórze, or in the former Schindler factory.

### Film recording

On many occasions in the history of the project, participants have been accompanied by camera operators. In 2014, this consisted of a film crew preparing a report for German television devoted to the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the German Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. The film showed three different groups of visitors to the Memorial, namely: students from the Hamburg Police School, Stadthagen Middle School near Hanover, and the project group from Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk in Breisach-Oberrisingen, who were accompanied and interviewed during their stay in Oświęcim. The outcome of the work is a very valuable documentary about our project group.<sup>168</sup>

The association 'Teaching for the Future – the Association for the Maintenance of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Children's Barrack' – also produced a film on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the 'Teaching for the Future' project entitled, '25 Years of the Project 'Teaching for the Future''. Furthermore, an impressive description of the project was compiled, including its future objectives.

### Free time

To avoid excessive strain on the participants, sufficient breaks are provided between individual points of the programme, during which

---

<sup>168</sup> See: [https://auschwitzundich.ard.de/auschwitz\\_und\\_ich/ARD-Dokumentation-Ich-fahre-nach-Auschwitz.auschwitz336.html](https://auschwitzundich.ard.de/auschwitz_und_ich/ARD-Dokumentation-Ich-fahre-nach-Auschwitz.auschwitz336.html) [accessed: 25.05.2019].

they get enough time to rest. Aside from the historical confrontation and conservation work, the project also includes a recreational aspect. About halfway through their stay, the group leaves Oświęcim and heads for Kraków. They visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and then Kraków's Old Town. The participants can visit the city individually. They also eat dinner in the evening in Kraków. Afterwards, the group returns to the International Youth Meeting Centre.

Every evening, after the official part of the programme, all participants can spend their free time in the common room of the IYMC in Oświęcim, together or with members of other groups. However, they often sit together with their guardians and recount their experiences of the day.

### Documentation

Every evening, after a round of reflection, participants work on the project documentation. They have a camera at their disposal every day (in previous years, participants often used their mobile phones). With the help of an adult, they write or report on their experiences of the day. They also decide which photos will be included in the documentation. The students of the Catholic University of Freiburg involved in the project prepare these materials, which are published upon their return to Germany.

### Questions

The project is often questioned. "Why go to Auschwitz if Dachau is closer?", "What does it offer young people?", "What if no right-wing extremist goes?", "Why are there emigrants among the participants?", "Why does it take so long?"

It is not always easy to justify why participants travel about 1,250 km for 12 hours to Auschwitz to work on a topic that may also be developed on Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk. Similarly, one could go to Dachau; that is easily accessible. Since the project is strongly connected with the history of the children's barrack in Auschwitz-Birkenau, however,

it makes perfect sense to take young people there. All participants – the socially disadvantaged, right-wing young people, migrants and German youths – talked about how important it was for them to deal with the topic onsite for that long. On the last day of the project, and upon their return to Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk, the participants are asked to share their experiences, which are often very touching.

Presented below are the statements of some of the participants, which are included in the project documentation:

“I’ve gained experience. I have heard many stories about Auschwitz and wanted to experience what happened there personally. I’ve changed and stopped making stupid remarks. I have also started to learn better.” (21-year-old participant).

“The children’s barrack was very dark. There was no beautiful view. It should never happen again. Birkenau has a long history. The rose should help to ensure that no more trains arrive there. I prayed to Our Father that no one would ever die there again.” (A 16-year-old teenager who placed his rose on the rails at the entrance gate in Birkenau).

“I’ve learned a lot. It has provided me with plenty of experience. I would like all of this to remain intact. It should not disappear. The neo-Nazis should visit the place at least for a moment to have any idea of the place.” (15-year-old).

“I can’t imagine what happened here; what the lives of the prisoners looked like. I told my mother about the visit; she was saddened and broke down a little.” (17-year-old).

“I saw and learned a lot. It is all in my head; I often think about it. Above all, I think about the pictures, pictures of children and emaciated people...I discussed it with my friend and told my mother about the trip, but she didn’t ask any further questions about it.” (17-year-old).

“So much has changed. I have to learn a lot about violence and hatred. I was overwhelmed by the rooms with hair and shoes, and I’ve been pondering over the conservation works on the Zyklon B cans. I discussed it with my family, my girlfriend and my tutors. I was very irritated when I saw how disrespectfully many visitors behaved in the

area of the crematorium. I would have loved to say something to them.” (17-year-old).

A young escapee who, as a minor, fled from Eritrea to Germany for over a year, and who visited Block 11 in the main camp as a participant in the project, said during the evaluation round: “I can understand how people lived here. In North Africa, I had to sleep for months on such straw mattresses before I got the chance to travel further to Europe.”

Another young man from a war-affected area, receiving his education at Campus Christophorus Jugendwerk, said after the ceremony in the children’s barracks that once he had laid his rose at the crematorium in Birkenau, he cut himself off from his past. A past that only reminded him of war at home. Now he can enjoy life in freedom. It was important for him to experience that, even though something bad had happened here in Europe, peace now prevails.

#### **‘Auschwitz - ‘Teaching for the Future’: Participants’ recollections**

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the association ‘Teaching for the Future – the Association for the Maintenance of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Children’s Barrack’, several participants were asked to write memories of their stay in Oświęcim, which was implemented as part of the project. The outcome is an extraordinary and impressive publication in which former participants of the project describe the memories of their stay at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site. Despite the fact that only 12 young participants and 24 adults expressed their opinions, the book is a valuable testimony. Furthermore, it also proves how meaningful the project ‘Teaching for the Future’ was, is and will be in the future.

TOMASZ MICHALIK

# People with DISABILITIES at the Museum: From Cognitive and Ethical Challenges to Hope for a New Version of History

*How can you become a witness [of history] when you cannot see?*

*Blind Love: A Holocaust Journey through Poland  
with Man's Best Friend*<sup>169</sup>

## Introduction

Who does the past belong to? A lot of people would like it to be a common good that everyone can enjoy.<sup>170</sup> In practice, not everyone has equal access to it. Among the neglected groups are people with disabilities.<sup>171</sup> Although they are often marginalized, as a group they do not represent marginal importance. According to data from the Central Statistical

---

<sup>169</sup> The question comes from the trailer of the film *Blind Love: A Holocaust Journey through Poland with Man's Best Friend* (dir. Eli Rubenstein) presenting a visit of the blind and visually impaired from Israel in places connected with the Holocaust during the March of the Living in 2013, asking the question, 'How can you become a witness when you cannot see?'

<sup>170</sup> Examples of such activities are constituted, amongst others, by the projects 'Included in History' and 'Accessible History' realized by the barrier-free culture foundation Fundacja Kultury Bez Barrier, aimed at increasing the accessibility of historical data: <http://kulturabezbarier.org/projekty,m,mg,40,186,191> [accessed: 15.05.2019]; <http://kulturabezbarier.org/historia-dostepna,m,mg,40,187,258> [accessed: 15.05.2019].

<sup>171</sup> Data referring to the participation of people with disabilities in culture represents a dispersed character. However, works concerning subsequent types of disability point to the presence of numerous physical, economic and social limitations in the access to cultural goods. Cf. L. Ploch, „Dyskryminacja osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną”, *Student niepełnosprawny. Szkice i rozprawy*, vol. 11 (2018) pp. 185–201, <http://hdl.handle.net/11331/1927> [accessed: 12.05.2019]; A. Nowak, „Uczestnictwo osób niepełnosprawnych w kulturze”, *Chowanna*, 1 (2015), p. 91–102; H. Żuraw, *Udział osób niepełnosprawnych w życiu społecznym*, Warszawa, 2008.

Office GUS, in Poland there are nearly 4.7 million people with disabilities, which constitutes 12.2% of the country's population.<sup>172</sup> Other studies (conducted by the European Union) demonstrate that this number is as high as 7.7 million.<sup>173</sup>

Together with Poland's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, our country confirmed that people with various disabilities are in possession of all, and not just selected, human rights and freedoms. At the same time, our state has committed itself to their implementation.<sup>174</sup> Among the rights mentioned is the right to equal access to cultural goods. One such example is constituted by the tragic event in the history of the world referred to as the Shoah.

Sharing the heritage of, as well as knowledge about, the Shoah constitutes a challenge, not only from a cognitive perspective, but also an ethical one.<sup>175</sup> There is no doubt that it is the memorial sites and martyrological museums that have a special mission towards reaching out to socially excluded people or those at risk of such exclusion. The reality of the Shoah is largely the story of marginalized persons, considered useless due to their nationality, physical or mental disabilities. The time has come not only to make this history available to those who are excluded for various reasons nowadays, but also to invite them to present their way of thinking about the tragic events of the Second World War.

---

<sup>172</sup> Central Statistical Office GUS. *National citizens and households census. Report on the results*, Warszawa, 2011, p. 63–67.

<sup>173</sup> The difference between survey results is connected with the methodology applied, as well as with the definition of disability. In the survey designed by Eurostat, disability was defined based on the subjective assessment of the capacity to perform everyday activities. In the research conducted within the framework of the National Census, legal criteria were taken into account together with the subjective assessment of health conditions, while the subjective criteria of feeling disabled were narrower than in the Eurostat research.

<sup>174</sup> "Convention on the Rights", *Journal of Laws 2012*, item 1169.

<sup>175</sup> P. Trojański (ed.), *Auschwitz i Holocaust: dylematy i wyzwania polskiej edukacji*, Oświęcim, 2008.

At the time of writing, six years have passed since Poland's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For the first time since its signing, Poland is somehow examining its conscience with reference to its implementation.<sup>176</sup> One of the issues discussed consists in the accessibility of public facilities for people with disabilities, as well as topics related to their education. In joining this discussion through the present article, I would like to take up issues which are of particular importance in the context of informal education conducted at museums related to historical topics. I wish to consider the question of the influence of cognitive schemes on the methods of shaping knowledge about the past and the form in which it is made accessible to visitors with special needs, and to point out the opportunities and threats resulting from our current mental habits. Finally, I will ask the question: if someone's body is not fully functional, does it mean that their thoughts are also impaired? Or are they just different from ours?

### **Disability: from definition to cognitive heteroschemes**

The notion of disability is currently used to describe a wide range of biological dysfunctions and social phenomena. Initially, however, it was connected in particular with war disabilities. After World War Two, it began to be used with reference to people unable to work. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the groups to which it now refers were gradually extended to include not only people of productive age, but also children and senior citizens.<sup>177</sup> In 1980, the World Health Organization published the International Classification of Disabilities, Impairments and Handicaps, in which an important distinction was

---

<sup>176</sup> In 2018, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, based in Geneva, addressed 52 questions to Poland concerning the implementation of the Convention in our country. Based on the submitted answers, a recommendation for subsequent changes was prepared. The discussed documents can be found in the UN Human Rights Committee resources (code CRPD/C/POL/Q/1; CRPD/C/POL/CO/1).

<sup>177</sup> K. Sala, „Polityka społeczna wobec osób niepełnosprawnych w Polsce”, *Wrocławskie Studia Politolologiczne*, 21 (2016), pp. 83–84.

made between functional and social disability.<sup>178</sup> The former applies to all biological limitations and deficiencies that prevent the free functioning of the individual; the latter indicates social exclusion due to functional disability. In subsequent classifications, based on the distinction introduced in 1980, the multidimensionality of the phenomenon of disability has been emphasized. It is revealed at the interface of biological characteristics, physical and social environment, and is thus has a biopsychosocial nature.<sup>179</sup>

As has been shown, the definition of disability has changed over time. In this way, disability is not an objective value, but a culturally constructed phenomenon.<sup>180</sup> Different people have, at different times, been referred to as disabled, thus excluding them from their community life. Bearing this fact in mind, a lot of researchers emphasize that disability does not only constitute a problem of biological nature, but in particular a social phenomenon.<sup>181</sup>

Aside from the development of medicine, it is crucial to remove cultural barriers created in relation to people suffering from disabilities. Disability is not a defect of the body, but begins when a disabled person encounters a hostile environment (both physically as well as culturally and socially).<sup>182</sup>

With this fact in mind, an increasing number of institutions, including museums, are introducing changes to make their collections and heritage accessible to as diverse a group of people as possible. Referring to the philosopher Foucault, we can say that such

---

<sup>178</sup> *International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps: A manual of classification relating to the consequences of disease*, published in accordance with resolution WHA29.35 of the Twenty-ninth World Health Assembly, May 1976, Geneva, Switzerland, World Health Organization: 1980.

<sup>179</sup> *International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health*, World Health Organization: 2001.

<sup>180</sup> M. Foucault, *History of Madness*, London, 2006.

<sup>181</sup> C. Barnes and G. Mercer, *Disability*, Cambridge, 2002.

<sup>182</sup> M. Zakrzewska and M. Zima-Parjaszewska, „Niepełnosprawność intelektualna – życie i prawo”, *Szkolenia Narodowego Instytutu Muzealnictwa i Ochrony Zbiorów*, 7 (2015), pp. 14–16.

institutions are trying to create other (better!) spaces, or heterotopias.<sup>183</sup> According to Foucault, these are specific worlds inside other worlds, places breaking out of the social order. In the “normal” world there are people who are excluded and deprived of equal access to cultural goods; yet in the heterotopic (i.e. alternative) world we are fighting for, people with disabilities should not encounter any physical, social or cultural barriers. This removal of barriers represents both spatial modifications (in the form of lifting architectural restrictions) as well as extending exhibitions and educational offers. As part of the latter, more and more facilities are developing materials and visitor routes dedicated to people with sensory disabilities, or lessons for people with intellectual disabilities. An undertaking of this kind is, for example, the project ‘Difficult–Simple Words’, implemented by Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim.

In the shadow of initiatives aimed at social changes and the elimination of barriers in the physical space, thought-based challenges remain. Although invisible, they are particularly important for educational projects. The transfer and production of knowledge is closely related to the way the human mind functions. So, to open up education to people with disabilities, we should think about changing the cognitive models we use to describe reality, or create a world in which our models will be available to those who perceive reality with a different palette of senses or conceptualize it in a different way. It is necessary to construct not only heterotopias (places that will be open to the education of people with special needs), but also cognitive heteroschemes (mental models that help us to put quotation marks around aspects we use routinely in our cognitive schemes, that is, distance ourselves from them, and thus facilitate new and different ways of thinking). This postulate also refers also to transferring knowledge about the past.

---

<sup>183</sup> M. Foucault, „Inne przestrzenie”, *Teksty Drugie*, 6 (2005), pp. 117–125.

### The past as a mental and abstract object

The past constitutes a very difficult subject of research and education. On the one hand, by definition, the past is what was and is therefore absent in the present. On the other, as researchers and educators addressing historical topics we are involved in something which constitutes the subject of our investigations. But it is abstract.

In trying to solve this issue, let us perform a simple mental experiment. Let us imagine that we are driving a car. Far away we can see a black cat running across the road. While approaching the animal we notice that it was not a cat, but a black dog. As we can observe, for a moment our thoughts were concentrated on something which did not exist in real life – the cat. It was a creation of our mind – a mental object, not a material one. We can think about the past in a similar way. On the one hand, the past is the result of a historical process (*res gestae*) that leaves various traces in the physical world. On the other hand, when we talk about the past or transfer knowledge about it, it has the status of a mental object. By definition, it does not exist in reality. Since the past is a mental object, we should consider it in relation to the way the mind functions.

Although thoughts are usually seen as immaterial beings, many studies conducted in the field of cognitive science indicate that the way we comprehend the environment and the very structure of concepts is strongly associated with the way our body experiences the physical world.<sup>184</sup> This is also the case for the concept of time, which is crucial for historical thinking. In their ground-breaking book *Metaphors in Our Lives*, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson showed that many of the concepts we use on a daily basis are metaphorical. This means that some concepts are understood by reference to others (usually more real, tangible, and sensually discernible).<sup>185</sup> Time is one of these abstract concepts. In analysing ways of talking about time relations, we can see that we perceive this concept

---

<sup>184</sup> M. Wilson, "Six Views of Embodied Cognition", *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 9 (2002), pp. 625–636.

<sup>185</sup> G. Lakoff and M. George, *Metaphors in Our Lives*, London, 2003.

in terms of a physical body moving in space or spatially oriented. Let's take the example of the following sentences:

The New Year is **behind** us. The holidays are **ahead** of us. [Time is an object oriented towards the body of the speaker (behind, ahead)]

The Battle of Grunewald constitutes a **distant** event. This lesson seems so **long**. [Time is perceived in spatial units [distance; length]]

The years are **passing by** quickly. [Time is an object moving in space (something/somebody passes by)].

Can you **place** this event in time? [Time is an object with spatial co-ordinates (location)]

Not only linguistic data, but also behavioural studies point to the crucial role of space in understanding time. In an experiment conducted on children in Greece, Italian researcher Daniel Casasanto and his team proved that spatial cues influence time estimation to a much greater extent than time influences estimations of distance.<sup>186</sup> In the study, the children's task was to follow the movement of two animals that were displayed on a computer screen. Then they estimated their travel time and the distance they had travelled. In a situation when two animals were walking for the same amount of time, but one of them covered a longer distance, the children would state that the animal which covered a longer distance must have been walking for a longer time. In the opposite situation, when the animals covered the same distance in different times, the length of the journey did not affect the assessment of the distance travelled. In a different study, Roberto Bottini demonstrated that understanding time in terms of a horizontal line showing the relationship of events (the model used in historical sciences in the form of a so-called timeline) may be related to reading. In research conducted on people reading from right to left and

---

<sup>186</sup> D. Casasanto, O. Fotakopoulou and L. Boroditsky, "Space and Time in the Child's Mind: Evidence for a Cross-Dimensional Asymmetry", *Cognitive Science*, 34 (2010), pp. 387–405.

from left to right, he indicated that thinking about the direction of the passage of time is correlated with the direction of reading. In most European countries, the past is located on the left side of the timeline, and the future on the right, according to the direction of reading; however, for example, in Hebrew the opposite is true. Perhaps following the text with your eyes (moving in time) is a pattern that we replicate when thinking about the past, present and future. Of equally interest is the fact that blind people reading Braille (right to left) show the same way of thinking about time.<sup>187</sup>

### **Disability and perception of the past**

The experiments presented in the previous section are just examples of studies on the perception of time. However, the results obtained in them sufficiently demonstrate the key characteristics of our temporal thinking. Time is constructed based on the contact with physical world (perception of the movement of objects in space and their location in reference to our body). Our relationships with the world are possible thanks to the senses and the mind, which processes the stimuli reaching us as well as direct the senses to those aspects of the environment which are of interest. Yet what happens to temporal thinking when the senses or cognitive system operate in a different or incomplete way?

Considering the current state of knowledge about the human cognitive system, as well as the width and diversity of the question of disability, it is impossible to create a holistic picture of temporal thinking for people with different disabilities. However, looking at individual disabilities, one can find testimonials indicating that some changes in the functioning of the senses and the functioning of the mind may lead to different ways of processing time information in comparison with those without such impairments. In the present paper, I would like to focus on people with intellectual disabilities.

---

<sup>187</sup> R. Bottini, D. Crepaldi, D. Casasanto, V. Crollen, O. Colligno, "Space and time in sighted and blind people", *Cognition*, 141 (2015), pp. 67–72.

Diagnosing intellectual disability is a complex task. Distinctive features include changes in intellectual functioning and building social relationships, as well as practical and adaptive actions.<sup>188</sup> Of the wide range of distinctive features that characterize people with intellectual disabilities, language behaviour and conceptual thinking are of major importance for the issues discussed here. Literature on the subject indicates that people with intellectual disabilities have difficulty thinking in abstract categories and with logical reasoning.<sup>189</sup> As previously mentioned, time belongs to a group of abstract categories.

### **The project 'Heritage for All' - from theory to practice**

By creating new (better) spaces (heterotopias), more and more institutions are opening up to people with various disabilities. This also applies to historical museums.<sup>190</sup> Such actions are highly desirable. In the case of educational projects, however, it is important not only to prepare an offer addressed to different groups, but also to constantly evaluate these programmes. With this in mind, in 2014, Dr Kornelia Kajda and Dr Dawid Kobińska, researchers from the Adam Mickiewicz University, together with the author of the present paper, in co-operation with the Special Schools Complex in Żary, conducted a research project aimed at investigating the perception of the past by people with intellectual disabilities.<sup>191</sup>

---

<sup>188</sup> *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders*. Fifth edition. American Psychiatric Association, Washington, 2013.

<sup>189</sup> J. Lausch-Żuk, „Pedagogika osób z umiarkowanym, znacznym i głębokim upośledzeniem umysłowym”, in: W. Dykcik, (ed.), *Pedagogika specjalna*, Poznań, 2001, p. 150.

<sup>190</sup> The Museum of the History of Polish Jews (POLIN) constitutes an example here, as within its offer it has included educational routes for the blind and deaf, as well as amenities for autistic visitors. Another example is the Warsaw Rising Museum which won the competition for the Warsaw facility best adapted to the needs of people with physical disabilities and the blind.

<sup>191</sup> A detailed project description, together with the study's results, were presented in the article: K. Kajda, T. Michalik, D. Kobińska, “Heritage for All. A Contribution to the Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Archaeology. A Polish Perspective”, *Current Swedish Archaeology*, 23 (2015), pp. 131–156.

14 students with mild and moderate disabilities took part in the project. It consisted of two parts: psychological tests on conceptualizing the past and a study on the impact of an organised trip to an archaeological site in Bieniów (an early medieval stronghold) and local memorial room for thinking about the past.

One of the key ways of interpreting the past is to analyse the traces left by people who lived before us. The project examined how people with general intellectual disabilities and non-disabilities analyse different types of clues about the past.. Two picture stimuli were prepared for this purpose. They consisted of drawings aimed at stimulating participants to talk about what happened in the past. The first drawing showed children in the playground. The second was a scene from the life of Stone Age people. Each of the stimuli contained many traces suggesting events from the past (in the case of the first picture there were, for example, paw prints, suggesting a dog must have passed here, and a broken window – somebody must have kicked a ball and broken it). The second included the remains of food that somebody was eating and a collapsed tree (showing a thunderstorm).



Picture 1. Stimulus 1, used in the study of inference about the past based on traces (illustrator: E. Sawicka).



Picture 2. Stimulus 2, used in the study of inference about the past based on traces (illustrator: E. Sawicka).

Answers concerning the drawings were recorded and then subjected to statistical analysis. Comparison of the ways of talking about the pictures revealed that in the case of the first picture, only three people with disabilities referred to events from the past, and in the second picture only one person did. In the control group (formed by non-disabled students the same age as respondents with disabilities), everyone noticed references to the past. At the same time, it turned out that participants with disabilities first paid attention to landscape elements or architecture, while those without disabilities concentrated on the people presented in the drawings.

In the second task, participants were asked to draw and talk about what they associated with the past. The aim of this experiment was to collect information on how this category is understood and whether there are any differences in thinking about it using different modalities (words vs. pictures). The results can be divided into two groups: (1) the past as something connected to life events of the respondents and their

families, and (2) erroneous associations – confusing the past with the future or present. At the same time, no differences were recorded in the context of the selected modalities. Both the words and pictures presented a similar way of understanding the past.

In the third experiment, ideas relating to the scale of time were examined. Respondents were asked what it means to them if something has happened recently, long ago and a very long time ago. Based on the obtained responses, it was found that the majority of those surveyed possessed a short scale of time – events considered very distant in time had, in fact, happened only a maximum of a few years before. This result suggests that people with disabilities do not possess the type of time scale used in historical thinking (tens, hundreds and thousands of years).

In addition to the psychological study, an important element of the project consisted of evaluating the visit to the archaeological site and the memorial room. During the visit, a guide educated in oligophrenic pedagogy (education of the intellectually disabled) told visitors about life in the Middle Ages. They had the opportunity to see remnants of the stronghold as well as material heritage originating from this place. After the visit, participants were asked to draw what they associate with 'the past'. This task was aimed at verifying whether their visit to the site had changed anything in the perception of the past by those with disabilities. The majority of the study's participants drew modern objects or the same representations they created before the trip.

### ***Special needs visitors at memorial sites***

The results presented above certainly contribute to the question about the role of informal education at historical sites. The 'Heritage for All' project has shown that, for some visitors, the perspective of thinking about the past can differ radically from the one we are used to. The results demonstrate that those surveyed have a short time scale and do not relate the past to historical events. The remnants and traces of the past do not constitute, for them, a legible testimony of people's lives in historical times. Furthermore, a visit to a site connected with prehistory did not significantly

change their perceptions of the past. At the same time, conversations held with participants showed that the visit to the site and the memorial brought a lot of satisfaction and stimulated them to think about the past in relation to their own lives. For them, the visit constituted added value.

Martyrological museums and memorial sites have a special mission to share and spread knowledge about the tragedy of the Shoah. At the same time, all those who express an intention to learn about this history should have the opportunity to visit authentic sites connected with it. For this reason, an important aspect is the constant expansion of the educational and exhibition offers at memorial sites and adjusting these to the needs of various groups. Such actions should have a social dimension (showing that no groups are excluded from the discourse of the memory of those murdered) as well as a cognitive dimension. Considering the latter aspect, it is of particular importance to undertake several activities:

1. Institutions connected with remembrance of the Shoah should not only be sites of research into this tragedy as an event in the history of humanity, but also institutions researching the knowledge of this historical fact. Adopting the line of reasoning presented in this paper, historical knowledge has the status of a mental object, and thus an important element of conscious educational policy should be the analysis of cognitive strategies and ways of processing the information presented in exhibitions by visitors to memorial sites.
2. Cognitive and social sciences are disciplines based on substantiating inference. This means that the knowledge they create is regular and not law. Research on people with various disabilities constitutes an important method for creating educational projects adapted to the needs of different individuals. However, they cannot replace studies and evaluations conducted at memorial sites themselves. Human cognition depends largely on the context in which the processes of acquiring knowledge take place, so if one wishes to know the effectiveness of educational activities conducted at memorial sites, they should be studied in these places.

3. Data obtained within the project concerning the perception of archaeological heritage by people with intellectual disabilities highlight that in some cases, education about the Shoah may require a redefinition of thinking about history. Instead of dates and events, it should have a personal and time-free dimension; be focused on answering the question of what the history of Auschwitz can add to everyday life; how to tell people about the unimaginable without referring to abstract notions and metanarrative; what a visit at the memorial site should provide, apart from knowledge; how to move from thinking about Auschwitz as a symbol recognized all over the world, constituting a metanarrative on human evil, to a personal experience connected with a visit to this place and not necessarily connected with historical knowledge.
4. Research on the perception of time by the blind demonstrates that learning to read in Braille is correlated with acquiring a linear concept of time.<sup>192</sup> Although the blind are deprived of access to visual data, and thus to printed content, thanks to a Braille language substitute they can acquire the same concept of time as sighted people. This is an important finding as it demonstrates that, thanks to various substitutes, we can fully transfer knowledge to people with sensory dysfunctions. Well-designed exhibitions and educational programmes should thus be multisensory, open not only to the sense of sight, but also hearing or touch. Such activities will also bring benefits to visitors without disabilities. The more information comes from different sources, the more likely they are to be remembered.
5. Modern education should be of a partnered nature. The mission and role of memorial sites is to share reliable knowledge about the Holocaust. However, such institutions should remain open to different ways of experiencing and understanding this history. It would be interesting to know how people with different sensory sensitivity perceive the material heritage connected with the Shoah: which

---

<sup>192</sup> Bottini et al., "Space and time", pp. 67–72.

features are important to them; which give clues for thinking about the past; how they perceive the space. It would also be important to discover the perspective of people with intellectual disabilities – what spaces and elements are important to them, what they record (for example, with the use of photography), what constitutes for them the symbol of the history which happened here? All this information can significantly enrich our way of thinking about history, discover its new meanings and dimensions. Just as past societies were diversified, so today we should strive for multi-perspective stories.

### **Summary**

In his article ‘Of Other Spaces’, Michel Foucault compared the notion of heterotopias with utopia and dystopias. The first one refers to the perfect world, which, however, is never realized; the second presents the world plunged into chaos, a pessimistic vision of the future.

We have no other choice – we have to create heterotopias. Quoting Foucault we can say that only they allow us to create a world in which we efficiently play utopian, perfect realities. When it comes to educational projects, in parallel to real-world activities, we should strive for mental changes. Conscious and responsible education requires the study of processes of knowledge acquisition and continuous evaluation of created projects. It is also associated with overcoming our own cognitive patterns in relation to thinking about what history is and what the past may constitute for different people. Finally, it should be focused not only on providing information, but on building a sense that by sharing knowledge about important events, everyone is invited to build a community.

MARCIN OWSIŃSKI

# Implementation of Inclusive Pedagogy Assumptions at the Stutthof Museum

A memorial site forms a multidimensional field of educational impact. Traumatic and difficult stories connected with dramatic events and people's suffering can be an inspiration to shape attitudes and reflections that are impossible to achieve in other places and narratives. In view of the profile of interests and expectations of various groups visiting the museum and memorial site (pupils, students, teachers, senior citizens, artists, etc.), a special challenge is associated with difficult environments: groups of students with disabilities, young people from care and educational facilities or prisoners. In the present article, I would like to present practical observations and experiences from working with such groups, which have been developed at the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo over several years. What is our expected aim and effect of such activities? Does it match the expectations of the group? What forms of work can be considered effective and can we talk about the success of our activities?

## **The mission and its dissemination**

A lot of space has been devoted in literature to the theory of education at memorial sites, and this is constantly being developed. Its main message consists in using the authenticity of the place to stimulate reflection and shape positive educational and civil attitudes. A well-planned and conducted educational process should result from the co-operation of museum educators and group supervisors; it should contain a preparatory stage for classes, their implementation at the memorial site, and a summary

and discussion after the visit. During the classes themselves, active and independent forms of participants' work are currently preferred.<sup>193</sup>

Each of the memorial sites defines its educational offer in the context of the historical specificity of a given institution. It is no different at the Stutthof Museum, which is strongly connected with the history of the region and perceived mainly through the lens of the fate of the Poles in the Pomerania region during the Second World War and the place associated with Germany's violent occupational policy.<sup>194</sup> In this sense, the mission of the Museum is first and foremost (apart from maintenance of the physical remnants of the camp) commemorating and sharing the fate of individuals who were camp inmates, their individualization and examples of their attitudes towards the totalitarian system. Since 2012, the main educational material supporting this educational mission has become the so-called *Pomeranian Educational Portfolio*, based on the profile of several dozen former prisoners with whom narrative interviews were conducted as part of a methodologically extensive project entitled 'The Last Witnesses'. The material was distributed at several dozen methodological and educational conferences and was very well received.<sup>195</sup> The biographical narrative method implemented in this way gives a wide spectrum of applications for different and exchangeable educational materials, artefacts and space for realization of different tasks based on a common theme. In our deep conviction and after several years of

<sup>193</sup> See the latest Polish group paper referring to this topic: T. Kranz (ed.), *Pedagogika pamięci. O teorii i praktyce edukacji w muzeach martyrologicznych*, Lublin, 2018.

<sup>194</sup> M. Owsiański, „(Z)rozumienie historii (Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie)”, in: M. Fabiszak and M. Owsiański (ed.), *Obóz-Muzeum. Trauma we współczesnym wystawiennictwie*, Kraków, 2013, pp. 81–95.

<sup>195</sup> M. Owsiański (ed.), *Pamiętam, pamiętam... Pomorza Gdańskie i obóz Stutthof 1939–1945. Materiały edukacyjne*, Sztutowo-Warszawa, 2012. Materials from the Portfolio are also available in the extended collection on the website [www.tekapomorska.pl](http://www.tekapomorska.pl) [accessed: 20.09.2018]. With reference to the project 'The Last Witnesses' see: M. Owsiański, „Programme 'Ostatni świadkowie' i wystawa 'Świadkowie generacji' w Muzeum Stutthof. Głos w dyskusji na temat misji miejsc pamięci w XXI wieku”, in: *Od Westerplatte do Norymbergi. II wojna światowa we współczesnej historiografii, muzealnictwie i edukacji. Materiały z Konferencji w Muzeum Stutthof w dniach 2–5 września 2009 roku*, Sztutowo 2009, pp. 364–368.

practical observation, we can conclude that the proposed convention and forms of classes fully meet their educational task and correspond to the museum's mission.<sup>196</sup> Such a scheme is also used when working with groups with special educational needs.

### **Guide-educators of groups with special needs at the Memorial site**

The key to proper implementation of classes lies in the co-operation between educator and teacher. A museum educator at a memorial site is not a teacher, much less an animator of free time spent outside school, which is often not understood by those representing schools.<sup>197</sup> In the context of the former camp premises, the guide must act as initiators of the activity stimulating discussion; they must be the source of expert knowledge as well as an authentic guide through both history and difficult emotions. They are partners, custodians and mentors for each potential audience, who must adapt their language, narrative and gestures to suit very different expectations and levels of perception. Such a person does not necessarily have to be an educated historian. In recent years, at the Stutthof Museum educators have included a German language specialist, a political scientist, a historian, a Polish language specialist, an archivist and an archaeologist. Each of them, using a common set of educational materials, has a set of tools specific to their profession needed to adapt each class to the perceptive capabilities of each group of recipients.

Groups with special educational needs certainly require more experience from their educator than those from a “standard” school. Their

<sup>196</sup> M. Owsiniński, “Die Biographierzählung als museumspädagogische Leitlinie des Museums Stutthof. Bisherige Erfahrungen und Zukunftspläne”, in: B. Dybaś, I. Nöbauer, L. Radonic (eds.), *Auschwitz im Kontext. Die ehemaligen Konzentrationslager im gegenwärtigen europäischen Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 2017, pp. 89–105.

<sup>197</sup> The availability of educational entertainment and different forms of fun offered in other museums (castles, residences, outdoor museums etc.) results in the fact that in such facilities, even museum educators themselves describe their work as fun; one of the first hits when searching the expression “who is a museum educator?” brings up the following results: [https://www.wuj.pl/UserFiles/File/Zarzadzanie%20w%20kulturze%2012/NOWE%20Zarzadzanie%20w%20kulturze\\_12\\_9a.pdf](https://www.wuj.pl/UserFiles/File/Zarzadzanie%20w%20kulturze%2012/NOWE%20Zarzadzanie%20w%20kulturze_12_9a.pdf) [accessed: 20.09.2018]. The work of the museum educator is defined in a similar way by the participant of Museum Educators Forum – see <http://edukacjamuzealna.pl/> [accessed: 20.09.2018].

expectations are, above all, emotions connected with the place in which they find themselves and its perception; source knowledge or educational aspects have less weight. In the context of museum educators, they are expected to possess specific skills connected with the visitors' special needs. It is, on the one hand, advisable to have great efficiency and confidence in the implementation of classes, drawn from those already conducted, as well as experience and continuing professional development in the form of qualifications and courses in the field of e.g. oligophrenic pedagogy or resocialization. Such experts can be found in our team and they mainly work with groups with special needs. According to our procedure, a person who already has obtained such qualifications and training shares their knowledge with colleagues during departmental meetings. In this way, the educational team has a sense of developing their skills and remain open to each new challenge. In short, educators at the Stutthof Museum educate each other often and in various areas.

### **Teacher/group supervisor**

When a teacher from one of the special schools in the region called me a dozen years ago, and said that he was planning to visit the Stutthof Museum with a group of his pupils suffering from mild and moderate intellectual disabilities, the only thing that occurred to him in the context of this group was for them to do physical work within the memorial site. He could not imagine that things could be any different or, moreover, that his pupils could become researchers of the region's history, prepare an exhibition or be courageous enough to take part in competitions addressed to all schools. Today, after several years of co-operation and educating many subsequent classes, the same teacher visits the Stutthof Museum several times a year and helps to shape the attitudes, social skills and knowledge of his pupils.

Nowadays, teachers often get lost in the daily routine of school activities and do not give their pupils or themselves the chance to try forms of extracurricular education offered by memorial sites that integrate the group into this learning, providing them with new practical and social

skills. From the perspective of observation and experience, it is clear that those teachers who, one day, call an educator for the first time and make the effort to organise a visit and classes at the memorial site, will come back to us with other groups of pupils and will themselves become the initiators of new teaching methods and projects. We are limited only by our imagination and the barriers which we impose on ourselves. It seems that the context of the authenticity of the memorial site and the weight of educational topics related to it have a major impact on this. Just as an educator learns about different groups and their expectations, so the teacher must learn the educational utility of a memorial site. There are no barriers to this joint learning and the axis of co-operation is formed by mutual understanding.

### **Special needs groups at the Stutthof Museum**

The limits are in our heads. Wheelchair users, the visually impaired and students from special schools with intellectual disabilities are very welcome to take part in educational classes conducted at the Stutthof Museum. In recent years, the number of such participants in educational activities at the Memorial site has been increasing.

Classes devoted to this field are individually agreed with teachers regarding their content and duration. Usually, the first trips mean taking gradual steps – from “ordinary” transfer of knowledge, getting used to the place, to more complicated and creative activities undertaken by students and teachers. These can include, for example, drawing or painting, taking photos, putting a film crew together to make a documentary film, learning the principles of volunteering, cleaning, or preparation for independent guiding around part of the Memorial site. Historical knowledge is not the most important thing; attention is paid to the context of the place and the message of what happened in it. The crucial aspect is the experience of the new, the different and the emotionally difficult, and that pupils are not left alone here. This can be accomplished by touch, for example, through the texture of a barrack’s wooden boards, or the fabric of camp striped uniform. It may be the experience of sharing bread or

playing sounds. What matters most here is empathy, friendly expression of emerging emotions and partnership in action.

Classes for these groups of visitors bear the collective title '**Stutthof and Us**' and they are characterized by two things. The majority of groups take part in one-day classes devoted to a specific topic, lasting about two hours. Their narrative axis is formed by a story told in an authentic place and referring to human experience in difficult circumstances: hunger, humiliation and hatred. This is not a story of extreme situations such as death or mass extermination. These classes arouse emotions, but they are also aimed at developing mechanisms that allow students to deal with them: describing feelings, dialogue, and expression.

The second type of classes within the programme are educational projects implemented throughout the school year and including a series of several (or more) meetings at the Stutthof Museum and at school, where a group of students (a class) strives to achieve a common goal. In one of these special schools, for instance, a project was created in this way, divided into the following stages and assumptions: a visit of museum staff to the school and a presentation on "What is a museum?"; the students' visit to the Stutthof Museum and a presentation about the place; another visit by museum staff to the school and a presentation on "What is a memorial site?"; finally, implementation of tasks and the presentation of their results. Subsequently, during several field classes, students (under the guidance of their teacher) documented commemorative plaques and monuments related to memorial sites in their town or city and its surroundings. Then, using their own artistic and computer skills, a presentation was prepared together with display boards documenting the field studies that had been conducted. The culmination of the project consisted of a public presentation of its results delivered by the pupils during a ceremonial event, where those gathered (including parents and teachers) learned many new things about the history of their region. In subsequent years, this school's projects of the school, created with the participation of the Stutthof Museum, were expanded to include the development of further skills and competencies: exhibition design

and guidance on using a video camera. Furthermore, for several years the school, aside from its educational programme, has been involved in volunteering during commemorative events at the Stutthof Museum.<sup>198</sup>

As a result of these activities, a group of young people was created who opened up socially and believed in themselves. The difficult aspect connected with the former German Nazi camp Stutthof in the context of groups with intellectual disabilities, therefore, is in developing educational tasks and projects allowing participants to gain the courage to create and express their emotions.

### **Minors in care and educational facilities at the memorial site**

The emotions accompanying groups of teenagers visiting the Stutthof Museum within the project **'Me at the Memorial Site'** that has been carried out for many years are, in turn, an example of the educational role that a visit to the memorial site can play. Students (both boys and girls) under probation supervision, from dysfunctional families and those experiencing violence who have been directed towards social rehabilitation in care and educational facilities constitute a large group of our regular pupils. In the majority of cases, co-operation between schools and educational centres takes the form of annual educational projects; one-day visits are less common. Our experience shows that the educational effectiveness of these meetings is due to their cyclicity and consistency of implantation, whilst one-off experiences have no long-term effects. Currently, the museum has signed co-operation agreements with several care and educational centres. Each of them is situated a considerable distance from the memorial site itself, so the students' trip requires a great deal of logistical preparation, but at the same time constitutes a form of reward for the best (and least problematic) students. We know from conversations with group supervisors that recruitment for the study group going to Sztutowo every year is indeed a much anticipated event.

---

<sup>198</sup> See Wolontariat – podsumowanie współpracy. <http://soswndg.pl/index.php/8-news/609--wolontariat-podsumowanie-wspolpracy> [accessed: 20.09.2018].

The educational concept of ‘Me at the Memorial Site’ is based on creating, in pupils, respect towards other people and showing them where hatred and violence can lead. Among the participants are often those who are significantly lagging behind in school and express difficult behaviour. Sometimes even the teachers themselves have doubts about potential longer-term effects. As one carer from Warsaw wrote in the project’s implementation register in 2010: *“Are our pupils mature enough to respect a place saturated with suffering and death? Will they understand its gravity?”*<sup>199</sup>

The realization of each project relies on the following methods, applied with varying degrees of intensity: a preparatory meeting before the trip to the memorial site; supervised work both at school and in the Museum; trips to other museums and historical sites; film screenings; meetings with witnesses of history; hiking trips; bonding trips; cleaning works within the memorial site; participation in anniversaries celebrations and discussions. Whichever task is to be performed should lead to the conclusion that the child is an important element of the community, can create their own historical narrative and can become a better person thanks to what they have seen, done and thought about.

During the main part of the programme, participants are usually accommodated in the Museum’s guest rooms. Throughout this time, educators spend a dozen or hours with them, acting as partners for discussion, the source of answers to questions. They also try to direct activities aimed at integration and group co-operation. Pupils learn basic historical facts related to the war and the history of the camp, but the workshops are mainly devoted to the analysis of attitudes and life experience that can be drawn from the memories and legacy of former inmates (legal and illegal correspondence, drawings, poems, personal belongings etc.). It soon becomes apparent that a teenage Polish boy from Warsaw, brought to KL Stutthof in 1944, can have a lot in common emotionally and socially with a young boy from the Warsaw district of Praga, put in a juvenile detention centre following a court verdict. His story, after

---

<sup>199</sup> See Projekt „Ja w miejscu pamięci”, <http://stutthof.org/node/256> [accessed: 20.09.2018].

all, refers to his family, friends and everyday problems, which tragically coincided with the war. A lot of similar parallel observations took place during meetings with former prisoners, who do not pretend that they were examples of good conduct all their lives. The meeting between charges of the youth care and educational centre MOW No. 4 in Warsaw and Mr Marek D., an elderly gentleman over the age of 90, was summarised by the latter: *“Dear friends, I used to be just like you... But each day of your life gives you the opportunity to do something good!”* This is one of the best educational lessons that one can witness.

Educational effects focused on social awareness and sensitivity also includes participation in state commemorative events at the Museum, and delegating the representatives of a given school to hold the banner of former prisoners. This is a great honour and distinction, which they especially try to earn by displaying a conscious attitude and behaviour throughout the project. Educational classes at the Museum are always complemented by a screening of the film entitled *The Wave (Die Welle)* showing by means of an initially innocent class experiment the mechanisms of manipulation and birth of violence in a modern school.<sup>200</sup>

The programme for care and educational centres at the Stutthof Museum always constitutes a big logistical challenge and work commitment, but constant contact between teachers or carers and participants allows us to have great satisfaction with observed effects and individual successes, making the world and people better. As one of the teachers wrote, observing their pupils after they had returned: *“Today, only a week after coming back from Warsaw, we already know the answer. The project has met our expectations and, most importantly, opened up a vast field of discussion about the past, but also about the future... “Truth, humanity, life, dignity” are the notions which seem to represent deeper meaning for all participants after the study visit. This is the reflection that remains, having read very valuable pieces of writing, i.e. personal notes kept by the boys during*

<sup>200</sup> The Wave (Die Welle, dir. Dennis Gansel), <https://www.filmweb.pl/film/Fala-2008-449973#> [accessed: 20.09.2018].

*their visit to the Museum. The project 'Me at the Memorial Site' constitutes not only a carefully thought-out and prepared history lesson. It is above all a very emotional encounter with those who remained behind the Gate of Death forever...*<sup>201</sup>

### **Prisoners and the former concentration camp**

While describing the activities undertaken in the field of education directed at those currently in prison, there is often a set of stereotypes associated with the general perception of life behind bars, and its easy confrontation with the image of a concentration camp. It might seem that prisoners who listen to stories about KL Stutthof will only ask about the possibility of escape from the camp, and will want to compare their fate to the life of a German concentration camp inmate. After years of developing and conducting our programme addressed to prisoners, we have realised nothing could be further from the truth.

The Stutthof Museum programme for inmates of detention centres, entitled '**Living Memory**', has been undertaken for eight years.<sup>202</sup> Its main assumption is to offer prisoners voluntary participation in a meeting, combined with a presentation about the history of the camp and a subsequent Q&A session. The next stages of the programme consist of a small group of inmates travelling to the Stutthof Museum and visiting the Memorial site. Later, this offer is complemented by inmates' work within the premises of the Memorial site and an exhibition displayed in the prison, created by participants, devoted to the history of the camp. If it is possible, educational activities showing the world and experience of the camp from the perspective of objects and former prisoners' records are also organised within the detention centre or the Museum.

The experience of travelling to prisons and conducting classes with their inmates has shown that they encounter huge interest and a lively

---

<sup>201</sup> See Druga edycja projektu „Ja w miejscu pamięci”, <http://www.stutthof.org/node/382> [accessed: 20.09.2018].

<sup>202</sup> See Wykład historyczny w Zakładzie Karnym w Malborku <http://stutthof.org/node/384> [accessed: 20.09.2018].

reception. 50 to 100 prisoners participate in the classes in each prison. Interestingly, in almost every group there are participants whose relatives were incarcerated in the Stutthof camp during the war. The meeting lasts a maximum of two hours and is based on a multimedia presentation about camp inmates' stories, as well as a Q&A session. The educator's narrative is not a typical historical lecture and has its own specific points highlighting this history in a particular context and universalizing the message. It is aimed at showing completely different personal situations and conditions which took place in the context of the German Nazi concentration camp: Poles, Jews etc., whose politics and ideologies placed them behind the barbed wire with no hope of getting out.

In the second layer of the message, the presentation of the people and their behaviour in the camp draws attention to the notions of good and evil as a man's autonomous choice, and to the lessons that can also be derived from the behaviour of perpetrators, prisoner functionaries (kapos) or doctors in the camp, who had their consciousness and character tested in extreme situations, and what consequences their actions would have had for them and their environment.

For this audience, history is primarily a means for reflection on their behaviour and choices, which also gives them the opportunity to ascertain that the easiest life choices are not always the proper ones. From the reports and observations of prison officers that we meet with, we have information that demonstrates that messages of this kind result in positive reflection for the inmates, and thus meets its educational and reformatory objectives. In a few cases, we also know that those released from these detention centres visit the Stutthof Museum in order to take part in a tour of the former camp, because the meeting in which they participated during their incarceration has remained ingrained in their memory.

## **Summary**

The examples of the work performed by Stutthof Museum educators with groups with special needs indicate various levels of using the same

historical message. The axis, constituted by the camp's history as well as the legacy and fate of its prisoners, makes it possible to shape classes in multiple ways towards the outcome desired by the recipient. For persons suffering from intellectual disabilities, this consists of them expressing themselves and their emotions; for children in care and educational centres, it is discovering the better side of themselves; while for prisoners, it lies in reflections on their own behaviour in the future. In all these groups, which are so different one from another, the past is used to think individually about the future – their own future and society's future, a specific lesson for their own further life.

Each year, several hundred visitors from groups with special needs benefit from the discussed forms of educational activity at the Stutthof Museum. In the recent years, our staff and competence-related opportunities have been extended and our practical experience is also constantly increasing. The number of participants of these special classes will certainly grow, too. A great advantage of our work is its mobility; groups are not always able to visit us, and so elements of the programme can be delivered directly within a given facility. The success of our activities is determined by the co-operation between the educator and teacher or supervisor, but also by the authenticity of the place and its message. This work is important and it brings a lot of satisfaction. It demonstrates that memorial sites give unprecedented opportunities to shape attitudes and reflection that impossible to experience anywhere else.

In the daily race of work, multiple variable factors and reports, we rarely have the time for our own reflection and to answer the question: does this even make any sense? It seems so. One day, one of our educators received the following letter:

*Hello! ;-)*

*My name is Sara, I'm a former pupil of the Youth Educational Centre in Samostrzel. I don't know if you remember, but I was in your group (I was in the second cohort, so I came on 5 June, 2014) as a visitor as part of the project. I secretly hope that you do remember us a little. J*

*I'm writing to ask whether you still have the photos taken on that day?*

*If yes, could you please send them to me by e-mail (if this is of course possible)? I know that I'm contacting you a little late, because it's already been a year and a half, but it is impossible to forget that day. These photos are very important to me, not only because of the last beautiful and moving moments with the girls, but also because it was the first time that I visited such a beautiful and depressing (due to the sad things that had happened there) place. I would also like to personally thank you very much for presenting (if it can be put this way) the history and feelings of the people who experienced Hell in that place.*

*In this place, you can really feel emotions that you can't forget. I don't know, maybe it's just my imagination/feeling, but while visiting your museum, I felt like those who had perished in such awful and terrifying conditions were sitting among us. But this is probably just my feeling. Personally, thanks to the place and its atmosphere, I enjoy every single moment and I appreciate my life more. Thank you again for such an emotional day and although I live in Silesia, I will definitely visit this place again, thanks to which I look at the world differently. After leaving the Museum and having heard part of the story of the life of its inmates, we are no longer the same people.*

*If you have the photos and can send them to me, I would be extremely grateful.*

*I'm waiting impatiently for your reply.*

*Regards, Sara! ;-)<sup>203</sup>*

---

<sup>203</sup> E-mail sent to the Education Department of the Stutthof Museum on 10.02.2016.

EWA GUZIAK

# History through Art: Historical Education of Teenagers with Disabilities at the Memorial Site through Polish-German Seminars

For a dozen years, the International Youth Meeting Centre has been implementing Polish-German projects for teenagers with hearing or sight disabilities. The main aim of these seminars is to confront the Auschwitz Memorial, its history and meaning, but also for the young from both countries to meet. An integral element of the project consists of the creation of artistic work, supervised by art therapists, as an expression of feelings, emotions and thoughts evoked during a visit to the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz. This article presents the assumptions of the project, emphasizing its universal character, and at the same time demonstrates an alternative form of education at the Memorial site for teenagers with disabilities.

## **The role of art: On the pedagogy of memorial sites**

*The demand that Auschwitz never happens again expresses the elementary task that can be assigned to education. (...) The fact that we are so unconscious of this task and the questions that it poses, however, shows that this nightmare did not penetrate people to the core, and so it means that it can be repeated in the sphere of human consciousness and subconsciousness. All disputes concerning educational ideals are trivial and meaningless compared to this one demand that Auschwitz never be repeated. It was a barbarism that any form of education tries to fight. There is talk of the threat of a return to barbarism. But this relapse is not a future threat: it*

*has already been manifested in Auschwitz. Barbarism still exists as long as the basic conditions that led to this relapse exist. And this is where the entire horror lies.*<sup>204</sup>

In the context of the words spoken by Theodor W. Adorno, the implementation of “education after Auschwitz” involves, on the one hand, the transfer of knowledge about the history of this place with an outline of its historical background, and on the other, the development of historical thinking and empathy. This education should be based on basic values such as tolerance, solidarity and a sense of responsibility leading to one’s own reflection on the reality that surrounds us.

Within the educational activity of memorial sites, the **recipient**, in particular the younger generation, is the most important factor. Participants’ activity in the teaching process should make it possible to discover the historical truth of a given place, as well as to understand key historical and contemporary issues in a cause and effect relationship. By using the process of exploring an authentic historical site, we bring young people closer to the distant past and encourage reflection on historical remembrance. Meetings with witnesses of this history, former prisoners of concentration camps, are now rare as part of real history and an element of **generational dialogue**. The passage of time and the associated transience make such meetings and the resulting educational benefits impossible. Recordings and films cannot reconstruct the moving moments that accompany each such meeting, or the so-called “meeting experience”. On the other hand, however, one must be aware of the fact that this phenomenon is a natural process that we must reckon with. Hence the importance of the records of a witness of history: sources, as they are defined in methodology. It is a carrier of memory, but also enters the – equally important – sphere of post-memory, i.e. shared remembrance.

Byron L. Sherwin, who is involved in teaching American teenagers about the Holocaust, emphasizes that “the educational challenge that we

---

<sup>204</sup> T. Adorno, *Wychowanie po Oświęcimiu*, *Znak*, 285(3) (1978), p. 47.

are facing is to explain the inexplicable to people who will not understand what they hear.”<sup>205</sup> For this reason, teaching history should bring young people closer to events that seem distant to them and have nothing to do with their current, modern lives, in the most authentic way and in a way that stimulates them to act.

The increasing time distance and survivors passing away require the search for new **alternative teaching methods**, in order for the younger generation to – by nurturing their memory – become responsible for future events. In one of his essays related to the problems of uniting Europe, Leszek Kołakowski writes: “We need the teaching of history in which young people will learn to understand who they are – who they are as the inheritors of both the glorious and despicable past.”<sup>206</sup> To meet these new tasks, museums, memorial sites and extracurricular teaching centres – based on the pedagogy of memory – use various forms of education in their educational and historical work. Tomasz Kranz emphasizes that “project-based education” brings very good educational and pedagogical results. For him, a project is a programme based on an action plan and the division of tasks which lead to the achievement of the intended goal. This type of education is focused on practical activity, whilst also teaching conceptual and team work.

Methods of pedagogical work at memorial sites should be based on the “learners’ creativity, taking into account the social aspect of education and be focused on practical activities combined with experiencing.”<sup>207</sup>

### **Art therapy as an alternative method for teaching history**

In extracurricular historical and social education programmes on World War II and National Socialism, elements and assumptions of pedagogy of art or art therapy are often used.

<sup>205</sup> B. L. Sherwin, „Nauczanie o Holocauście”, in: *Duchowe dziedzictwo Żydów polskich*, Warszawa, 1995, p. 254.

<sup>206</sup> A. Śniadowski, *Historia w szkole* <http://www.wsp.krakow.pl/konspekt/14/sniad.html> [accessed: 12.12.2006]

<sup>207</sup> T. Kranz, „Pedagogika pamięci”, *Pro Memoria*, 23 (2005), p. 67.

Psychology recognises the **theory of emotions** as the theoretical basis for art therapy (therapy through art). According to this theory, individuals are naturally driven in the pursuit of experiencing positive emotions, which include happiness, hope and sensual pleasures. Art therapy refers also to the **theory of needs**, which constitute the basic stimulators of human activity, such as the need of self-realization, allowing us to undertake courageous and creative activities and consisting of constructive problem solving. **In contrast to the pedagogy of art, art therapy is connected with a therapeutic effect, in which the creative process represents healing properties.**<sup>208</sup> Aesthetic activities assume self-cleaning, activity in self-expression and artistic creation, as well as sensual, spiritual and emotional personality development.

Art therapy, as emphasized by Birgit Dorner, “can actively support confrontation with history and is more widely used where (verbal) language as a means of communication is not enough or does not meet the expectations of recipients in the most accessible forms of expression.”<sup>209</sup>

Using art therapy at a memorial site as a transformer of historical facts opens up space for action. “Art” is understood as work in the visual and sensual world, as an action using artistic forms of expression. **Art therapy refers to the simplest ways of self-expression of which each human being is capable, irrespective of their age, health condition or artistic skills.** Assuming that deep inside everyone there is a genius with creative potential and the skills for artistic confrontation, we can all take part in such work.

Art therapy is aimed at the addressee. On the one hand, it is an activity that releases the potential of recipients and supporting learning through discovery. On the other, hand it motivates – in multiple ways

---

<sup>208</sup> R. Różycka, „Art-terapia”, in: M. Piszczek, *Terapia zabawą. Terapia przez sztukę*, Warszawa, 2002, p. 95.

<sup>209</sup> B. Dorner, „Bilder der Verführung – Bilder der Erinnerung – gestaltete Bilder, Kunstpädagogik in der Gedenkstättenarbeit“, in: B. Dorner and K. Engelhardt, *Arbeit an Bildern der Erinnerung. Ästhetische Praxis, außerschulische Jugendbildung und Gedenkstättenpädagogik*, Stuttgart, 2006, p. 7.

– the reflective process regarding perceived images/objects and one’s capacity of perceiving and acting.

The pedagogy of art, as well as art therapy, assumes that active processes of creative activity have the **potential for change**. This happens through constant dialogue during the act of creation, through created work, and through the reflection on one’s self, values and beliefs.

Birgit Dorner points out that, “The historical discourse of National Socialism is based primarily on scientific studies. Historical facts are shared, reconstructed, interpreted and analysed.”<sup>210</sup> If science, education and history function through language and texts, it seems questionable that we can achieve important educational goals among the younger generation in this way. In this case, it can be helpful to refer to so-called camp art, which was created in KL Auschwitz illegally or by order of the camp authorities.

Young people, with their new aesthetic sensitivity through visual worlds need a completely new approach towards history teaching and education. Using art in historical education “changes the texts and facts” into a creative process. The active attitude of the recipient in the creative process is easily discernible. In a situation which the recipient considers difficult, or while no activities are being performed, interference is possible, understood as supporting the artistic and historical process. For this reason, the use of elements of art in educational work at memorial sites should be used primarily in working with disadvantaged groups, such as adolescents with emotional problems, people with physical disabilities, the socially neglected or those with impaired hearing or sight.

### **Polish-German seminars for teenagers with disabilities as an example of using art therapy at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial**

The International Youth Meeting Centre in Oświęcim is an educational institution founded in 1986 on the initiative of the German organization

---

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, pp. 7–8.

the Action Reconciliation Service – Service for Peace and the Town of Oświęcim.

The International Youth Meeting Centre considers its main commitment to be the commemoration of the spiritual heritage of the victims of KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, and therefore, it refers in a specific way to KL Auschwitz-Birkenau as the historical site of the implementation of the political will of the Shoah.

Pedagogical work at the Meeting Centre is based on three assumptions:

- Auschwitz is too painful a lesson, for man and humanity, to be forgotten;
- You can learn from history and draw conclusions for the future;
- Ignorance, and ignorance of each other, are the basis for fears, prejudice and hostility among people.

One of the examples of pedagogical work within the Centre are artistic seminars for teenagers with disabilities from Poland and Germany.<sup>211</sup> The Centre, perceiving the chances and development opportunities for these kinds of projects, has been including them in their seminar offer for several years.

To date, 10 international projects have been implemented in the Centre:

- November 1999 – Polish-German artistic workshops for deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers (oil painting, work in clay);
- November 2000 – **‘Artistic Encounters’** – Polish-German artistic workshops for deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers (linocut, collage on canvas, spatial installations);
- January 2002 – **‘Auschwitz on Glass’** – Polish-German artistic workshops for deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers (painting on glass);

---

<sup>211</sup> While using the notion of disability, I refer exclusively to people for whom the projects were created, i.e. for the blind and visually-impaired as well as deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers.

- May – June 2003 – ‘**...If the Stones Could Talk**’ – Polish-German artistic workshops for blind and sight-impaired teenagers (sculptures in stone, Ytong);
- June – July 2004 – ‘**...Like a Tree**’ – Polish-German artistic workshops for deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers (sculptures in tree trunks);
- June 2006 (Part I): ‘**The Patience of Paper**’ – Polish-German artistic workshops for blind and sight-impaired teenagers (works made from different types of paper);
- November 2006 (Part II): ‘**The Patience of Paper**’ – Polish-German artistic workshops for blind and sight-impaired teenagers;
- May 2007 – ‘**Not to be Thrown Away**’ – Polish-German artistic workshops for deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers (works made from recyclable materials);
- November 2014 – ‘**Touch is Visible**’ – Polish-German seminar for blind and visually-impaired teenagers within the framework of a subsidy programme of the Polish-German Youth Co-operation ‘Preserving Memory’ (sculptures on plaster boards and preparing prints);
- November 2016 – ‘**Words and Values**’ – Polish-German seminar for blind and visually-impaired teenagers within the framework of a subsidy programme of the Polish-German Youth Co-operation ‘Preserving Memory’ (creations on big wooden boards with the use of timber discs).

### **Project assumptions**

Discovering the history of the former German Nazi camp Auschwitz and understanding these tragic events is of major importance for everyone, including people with disabilities who should have the **opportunity to integrate into the historical process of society’s functioning and activity**. Failure to shape the younger generation through historical education or a cursory treatment of the history of KL Auschwitz

among disabled youth may somehow result in their being unwittingly excluded from society.

Study trips to memorial sites and project-based education are active educational forms and should therefore be included in educational programmes addressed to teenagers with disabilities. A visit to a memorial site leaves a lot of experiences, thoughts, emotions and unanswered questions in every person. As Tomasz Kranz claims, “historical sites are spaces with a high emotional load.”<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, Krystyna Oleksy points to maintaining the balance between “emotio” and “ratio”.<sup>213</sup> Therefore, young people should be provided with the conditions to be able to receive the most important historical information, on the one hand, and on the other, to have time to think about history and what it means specifically “here and now”.

### **Confronting a historical site**

The Polish-German artistic seminars held in the International Youth Meeting Centre use the **historical site and the vicinity of the former camp premises** as a cognitive, educational and confrontational element.

The cognitive element is related to the participants’ visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial during a two-day guided study visit. At that time, young people remain on the premises of an **authentic historical site**. This authenticity is key, as well as the source and evidence of the crime.

**The vicinity of the former camp premises**, however, is experienced from the place of the project’s implementation, i.e. the Centre. During the project, seminar participants are accommodated in the Centre, situated a 20-minute walk from the former main camp. This conscious physical proximity of the former camp – at their fingertips

---

<sup>212</sup> T. Kranz, *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci*, Lublin, 2002, p. 62.

<sup>213</sup> K. Oleksy, „Centrum Edukacji w Miejscu Pamięci i Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau”, in: K. Dethlefsen (ed.), *Pamięć i upamiętnianie – o znaczeniu edukacji historyczno-politycznej w polsko-niemieckiej wymianie młodzieży*, Poczdam-Warszawa, 2003, pp. 184–185.

– and the possibility to go there any time is the source of additional impressions and reflections. This influences the subconscious experiencing of **this place** outside the physical camp borders, from a certain “limited” distance.

The educational element is primarily the use of the episodic and emotional character of the project. The emotional factor is used for initiating educational and artistic work. The consolidation of personal impressions, combined with the historical facts, make it possible for participants to become more deeply involved in the subject and reach conclusions which have an important influence on shaping their own worldview.

The confrontational element means initiating participants’ activity during the creative process. The creative process, understood as the realisation of their own concept, forces participants to articulate their most inexpressible and difficult emotions, sensations and thoughts. This is even more important as we are working with people for whom communication with the surrounding world is limited or impeded. Artistic activities release additional emotions related to the work and artistic technique itself, meaning that young people must overcome psychological barriers, and thus their own weaknesses and limitations. For teenagers with disabilities, such an artistic form of expression allows for a deeper experience of the place, themselves and the group.

### **The Polish-German encounter**

The project enables young people from Poland and Germany to meet their peers. Spending time together and working together form the groups’ mutual interaction and makes it possible to get to know each other better, as one group. Polish participants become for their German peers not just “some” Poles, but specific individuals, and German participants become concrete people from Germany. This tightens the relationships and at the same time breaks down prejudice and stereotypes.

The unique character of this Polish-German project for people with disabilities is influenced by the fact that the axis of the seminar is formed by a historical subject, i.e. discovering the history of the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz. Historical issues also apply to international relations, i.e. Polish-German relationships, which constitutes another challenge for young people.

After the visit to the Auschwitz Memorial, the integration process solidifies. Common experiences and activities related to the memorial site constitute a starting point for exchanging experiences, conversations, discussions and getting to know each other better. The ongoing reconciliation process in the historical, generational and national context results in another bonding element. During summary discussions, the young participants always emphasize that the possibility of establishing contacts with others is a very important experience. This is of particular significance for people with disabilities, as they do not always have the opportunity to experience such encounters with their peers from other countries.

### **Disability - opportunities and limits**

Projects for the blind and visually-impaired, as well as the deaf and hearing-impaired, differ in terms of some forms of work and are adapted to the type of disability.

### **Group communication - a language problem**

Group communication among the deaf takes place via sign language.<sup>214</sup> Conversations during the forum are translated into Polish and German, but also into the Polish and German sign languages. The project leaders believe that each of the participants should have the opportunity to hear the issues discussed and take part in discussions in their own mother tongue. Double translation forces the organisers to maintain a certain

---

<sup>214</sup> A universal, international sign language does not exist. Each country or even region has its own and different variant of sign language. Sign language is subject to the same processes as spoken language.

level of discipline in order to avoid “over-talk” during certain points of the programme, as well as to monitor the group’s concentration and attention, which gets significantly lower towards the end of the day during such an intensive programme.

Added value consists of the ability to communicate between participants using sign language. Contact becomes more intense and frequent, which influences the dynamics of the bonding process.

Communication within a group of the blind and visually-impaired is through words. The language translation is single, i.e. Polish into German and vice versa. Communication between the participants, however, is significantly limited. If participants do not use the other group’s language, or (optionally) English, at least at a minimal level, there may be no direct, spontaneous contacts or conversations. That is why project leaders must take this into account and plan a large number of integrative and cognitive classes at the beginning of the project, so that the group can trust each other and its individual members feel safe with each other.

### **Visit to the former KL Auschwitz camp**

The key point of all the projects consists is the visit to the Auschwitz Memorial, taking the form of a two-day study visit in national groups. The history of the main camp at Auschwitz I is presented on the first day, and the next is dedicated to the history of Auschwitz II–Birkenau.

During a visit of deaf participants, care should be taken to ensure that the content presented reflects their area of vision. The tour is translated into sign language.

Among the blind and visually-impaired, a narrative accompanying the visual elements of the exhibition is crucial.

### **Artistic activities - the creative process**

An interest in history constitutes the main condition for participation in the project. There are, however, no requirements in terms of artistic skills or experiences. The project assumes that all its participants receive basic information and an introduction related to a particular artistic

technique, and are supported during the artistic process by art therapists who monitor their work, give advice and direct artistic activities, which creates equal opportunities for all participants. At each stage of the creative process, they receive the support they need. Artistic tasks are planned so that young people do not feel overloaded, as unrealistically high requirements may limit their motivation.

The role of artistic activities and creative process during the project can be presented as:

- assistance in working through emotions and impressions after the visit to the Auschwitz Memorial;
- strengthening the integration process of the Polish-German group;
- learning a new artistic technique, experimenting with materials;
- discovery and development of their own capabilities.

### **Assistance in working through emotions and impressions after the visit to the Auschwitz Memorial**

The main aim of the project is for the participants to articulate their emotions, impressions and thoughts after the visit to the former camp in an artistic form. After the visit to the memorial site the young people, filled with emotions, impressions and feelings, begin their own work, which consists of: the materials; their own vision (or lack thereof); unconscious possibilities; conscious limitations; time; and the advice of the art therapists. Often, only confronting the materials gives birth to visions and ideas. The realization of the idea itself is born through proverbial “pain and hardships”. The art therapists aptly guide the participants through the process of creating their own works, supporting them at each stage of the creative process. The sense of pride, satisfaction and happiness of the participants with the work they have created are the determinants of this project.

The resulting works are full of deep feelings and thoughts, which is confirmed by accompanying comments. Each piece is commented upon by the participants, thus complementing it and expressing the artist’s message. The texts are short, but very emotional and thought-provoking.

### **The integration process of the Polish-German group**

At the beginning of the project, participants often feel anxious and fearful, worrying about their reactions after the visit, but also about being misunderstood by other group members. Reflective discussion and joint artistic work promote the integration process. The young people begin to trust one another, thus building a feeling of emotional security. Creating artistic works together is helpful in challenging their weaknesses and fighting their limitations. Participants look at other members' work with great interest, expressing their approval and understanding. These situations of reciprocal support within the creative process have a great bonding effect on the group.

It can be said that the joint artistic activities are only an initiator within the integration process. Ultimately, the course of this process largely depends on the involvement of the participants themselves.

### **Experimenting with materials**

For the participants, the days that they spend together rely on working with a new technique. Experimenting with stone, wood or paper involves experiencing its features and properties, its possibilities and limitations. To some extent, this means “making friends” with the materials. In this process there is a specific interaction: material – artist, artist – material. Learning how to “handle” the material implies the final result. It would be rather difficult to create a satisfactory work of art if one lacked e.g. patience or perseverance. Young people often stress this kind of experience to be an interesting one. During the creative process, the pace of work varies. Everybody determines their own rhythm of work, rest periods and breaks.

### **Discovery and development of their own capacities**

Within the creative process, the implementation of an idea is linked with experiencing oneself and overcoming our own limits, in this case resulting, on the one hand, from disability, and on the other, from discovering our own abilities. For people with disabilities this type of work has therapeutic significance. Feeling undervalued, low self-esteem and constant

comparisons with the non-disabled accompany people with disabilities throughout their entire lives. During the project, everyone has the possibility to experience themselves, their strengths and skills, and through their realized ideas prove to be able to do a lot.

Overcoming internal barriers and limitations makes young people feel satisfied, happy and proud. Experiencing one's own limits and possibilities strengthens the sense of self-awareness and is a way to get to know oneself better.

### **Presentation of works during the exhibition**

As part of the project's concept, the seminar is summarised with a ceremonial opening of the exhibition displaying completed works. Citizens of Oświęcim and other groups staying at the Centre are invited to the exhibition, which adds to its prestige and meaning. All of the works created are presented for the first time. For the participants, the exhibition is a unique experience, as they assume the role of authors/creators and not visitors.

### **Documenting the project**

When the project comes to its end, the organisers begin to document the project in the form of an exhibition catalogue. Each participant receives a few copies of this catalogue, which is a souvenir of the days spent together, but also gives them the opportunity to present their achievements to their loved ones. Thanks to this documentation, the project "lives" its own life and its message is shared further.

### **Project beneficiaries**

#### **Project partners**

An institution, school or organisation involved in educating young people with hearing or sight disabilities is invited to each project. They are responsible for recruiting project participants as well as preparing them substantively. The conditions of participant are the same for each group

participating in the seminar. The method of co-financing the project is discussed directly with the representatives of the school or institution.

The projects are mainly financed with funds from the Polish-German Youth Co-operation.

### **Group tutors**

Carers or teachers prepare the participants for the workshops. In addition, they accompany them throughout the entire project. They are direct partners for young people in educational situations and support those supervising the project during some points of the programme.

### **Project team**

The team firstly consists of a member of the International Youth Meeting Centre staff, responsible for the technical and content-related parts of the project. This begins with project co-financing and co-operation with the group supervisors, through the co-ordination of technical preparation, to conceptual work with art therapists.

The art therapists have been educated in art therapy at the College of Art Education in Nürtingen. Their professional experience rests with their responsibility for the artistic and workshop parts. Their emphatic commitment and well-thought-out activities introducing young people to their own work are decisive for the final effects. At each project stage, the participants' group and individual processes are discussed.

### **Participants**

Participants of the project are young people aged from 16 to 23. Such age discrepancy results from differences in the Polish and German education systems. The primary condition for participation is interest in the topic, and interest in art is also appreciated.

A Polish-English translator accompanies the seminar groups, taking part in all activities included in the programme. Among the deaf there are also those using sign language; they are usually group tutors who assume the responsibility for interpretation.

## 'If the Stones Could Talk' Seminar

– Polish-German artistic workshops for blind and visually-impaired teenagers (sculptures in stone, Ytong)

*Stones surround us everywhere. For most people they are cold, inaccessible and hard.*

*But stones “live and breathe”. In such a place as Auschwitz, history is hidden in the stones, so for us they are of symbolical character, being witnesses of time. We can become aware of the “burden of those days”, kept within them.*

*In our project, stone as an artistic material has become the medium connecting the past with the present. It connects young people with the generation of those who remember those days but are now passing away. It accumulates all the fears, worries and emotions of young people, which have been very deeply ingrained in the nooks and crannies of their minds and souls and were revived while visiting the former camp. It provides an appropriate form for empathy, compassion and remembrance.*

*Life, love, peace – these are conscious milestones to human happiness. The stones have awoken, have spoken, touched the words, expressed their unique history...*

Ewa Guziak

### Examples of works by participants



FOT. MARIETA WARDOWSKA, SPÓKAN, MŁODZIEŻ W OSWIECIMIU

*This hand is open in a gesture of request, and there are these darker spots on the fingertips, which symbolises frostbite.*

*I like my work, I think I did what the stone asked me to do before it became a hand.*

*The time comes for everyone,  
everyone has to die one day.*

*One day does not mean now.*

*All I see is a hand,*

*Open and dirty...*

Barbara Kozłowska



*My stone talks about human suffering. I've presented it in the form of a heart, on which you can see many cracks. The heart is a little torn on one side. It looks as if it was broken, but no one knows how and where it happened. My stone is asking me to fix it if I'm able to do it. But I know this isn't possible as this is what its fate was supposed to be.*

Marta Dziedzic

### **'...Like a Tree' Seminar**

– Polish-German artistic workshops for deaf and hearing-impaired teenagers (sculptures in tree trunks)

*Trees in Auschwitz, similarly to stones, surround us as witnesses of time. Museum documentation makes us realize which trees were there then. Standing in front of such a healthy and branchy tree, it is difficult to become aware of the history of those days. As time passed by, they bloomed and grew. Today, we admire their beauty and willingness to live, just like we admire the people who lived to see the end of this tragedy.*

*Wood, as the material accompanying our joint meeting, received the meaning of "friendship trees". On them, the participants carved symbols, visible upon closer inspection. While admiring the works prepared in this way, we admire the history which they, the younger generation, have left us. The history of Polish-German friendship. The history of understanding among the deaf. Their own histories. The history of friendship.*

Ewa Guziak

## Examples of works by participants



FOT. MIĘDZYNARODOWY DOM SPORTKAR MIŁOZIECY W OSWIECIMIU

*We experienced that a tree means different things. Through sculpture we were expressing our own feelings. This work is a part of ourselves which remains here. The sculpted waiter serves the Poles and the Germans not only food and drinks, but also peace and friendship.*

Anna Tolschikov,  
Ewa Cieśla,  
Agnieszka Susowska



FOT. MIĘDZYNARODOWY DOM SPORTKAR MIŁOZIECY W OSWIECIMIU

*Together we sculpted a tree-owl. The owl is the symbol of wisdom, as it can find a solution in any difficult situation. The owl has wings which protect us against evil and give us a sense of security. The flowers, sun and heart radiate warmth.*

Markus Cavellius,  
Sebastian Tiefers,  
Rita Depka,  
Justyna Denega

## 'The Patience of Paper' Seminar

– Polish-German artistic workshops for blind and visually-impaired teenagers (works made from different types of paper);

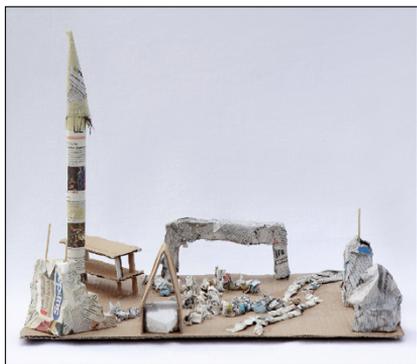
*We do not have enough time to think about the significance of paper in our lives, as it accompanies us almost every minute, and for this reason it is nearly imperceptible, invisible to us. Due to its common*

*availability, it is also treated as an invaluable thing and we more often associate it with used paper, with waste.*

*The perceptible symbolism of paper at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial is in falsified camp documentation, accompanying inmates from the moment of their arrival until their death. In particular, all registered deaths and their description reflect human tragedy. In a situation where the language refused to obey, art responded. Artists at Auschwitz shared their feelings and thoughts with us, but also their needs and fears, through art. During the seminar, paper gave us a lesson in patience...*

Ewa Guziak

### Examples of works by participants



FOT. MIĘDZYNARODOWY DOM SPOŁECZNAJ MŁODZIEŻY W OSWIECIMIU

*I have presented my impressions after the visit to the concentration camp using paper – I created a small town. With the use of cardboard, paper, Styrofoam and toothpicks, I created the gate, tower, stairs, railway tracks, roads, houses and a bed outside the barrack. In this way I'm coming back, with my thoughts, to the awful conditions in the concentration camps.*

Manuel Binder



FOT. MIĘDZYNARODOWY DOM SPOŁECZNAJ MŁODZIEŻY W OSWIECIMIU

*The earth unites everybody, irrespective of their religion, the colour of their skin, hair or eyes...*

Maria Zalińska,  
Magdalena Kapnik

## History through art

Using **art** for projects at the Memorial site undoubtedly constitutes an active form of education. Its strength lies in learning through action, which is why all project participants are involved in the process. Due to its universal nature, the project can be described as **an alternative form of education**. Art makes it possible for young people to discover and experience the Auschwitz Memorial site as a historical and authentic place and, through the work created, a place of their own artistic reflection. What becomes familiar and “domesticated” brings no more fear or anxiety, but broadens the horizons and perspectives for the perception of ourselves and others.

The projects always bring the expected results. Participants leave the Centre with:

- **in-depth knowledge** about the historic site of Auschwitz;
- **positive group experiences** as an element of co-creation, collaboration and compassion;
- **positive experiences of self** through new challenges and pride in the presented work;
- **positive experience of one’s personality** through breaking down one’s own emotional and physical barriers;
- **positive experiences with using art** as a way to express one’s thoughts and emotions.

An example can be found in the statements of participants, who emphasize that they have become somehow “united” during these few days with one another. Marcin Furdyna, who took part in the first meeting, said that he had visited the former Auschwitz camp three times, but he had never experienced it as intensely as here.

Monika Janik, participant in the ‘Touch is Visible’ project, said: *I still remember that my stay in Oświęcim was a source of strong emotions for me. I was there for the first time and felt it all strongly. It was particularly moving that the experience could be reproduced in art, by carving in plaster.*

*This was a new experience for me. It was also valuable as I could learn how other people sense and perceive the topic of the extermination camps. The experience of these several days in Oświęcim made me richer, but I wouldn't like to experience it again.*

PIOTR KONDRATOWICZ

## **Emotions in the World of Silence: The Deaf at the Authentic Memorial Site - Auschwitz, where Silence may Mean More than a Thousand Words...**

A group of visitors is standing by the gate to the former Auschwitz-Birkenau camp. They are accompanied by a guide. One of many groups. After taking a closer look at them, however, one can see several differences compared to other groups. They are not wearing headphones, one cannot hear them talking and they do not seem to be looking at the Museum guide. Instead, the eyes of all group members are on one person who, standing near the guide, is making “strange” gestures and faces and looks like a theatrical performer. And there is one more detail. Nearly all of them have small devices in their ears, often connected to their scalp by cables.

For us – those connected to the world of the deaf – such a situation is an everyday reality. We often become “centrepieces” and are treated like “phenomena”. A sign language interpreter (used by the deaf) needs to act and present the emotions with their entire body. It is the only way to show their pupils the truth, shared as the tour guide explains the reality of the Museum. Is this necessary? Are all these “faces”, “gestures”, sometimes involving other people, crucial? Do they have to “perform” like this in such a place as a former concentration camp?

Answer this question for yourself: is there a different way to present the information the guide gives in a language which does not include such words as ‘extermination’, ‘gas chambers’, ‘selection’, ‘concentration camp’, ‘ramp’... Is it possible to describe deathly injections into the heart in any other way than by inviting three people from the group to act

such a scene out? Would the deaf feel embarrassed, would they resist? No! They will grab a friend's hands with curiosity, tell him or her to sit on an imaginary stool and the interpreter will "have to" play the role of executioner who, using a syringe with a needle, will inject the poison into the victim's heart, penetrating the breastbone. A lot of Museum visitors will feel outraged by such a scene; a lot of them will leave, disgusted and insulting the "actors" in their mind. But this is the only way to talk about the crime which took place here in the language of the deaf.

How do the deaf perceive the reality of the former camp? Do they react to the same things and in the same way as those who are able to hear? When asked what impressed the group the most, what stuck in their memory after a guided tour of the Museum, they give answers which may be of surprise. They pay attention to details that the majority of visitors ignore. After one visit to the Museum, after visiting Block 11, I asked my pupils about their first impressions: what stuck in their memory, what moved them? Their answers surprised me. The worst feeling was that a deaf person could be locked in the "standing cells" without light and thus without the possibility of communication. In addition, I received the answer that leaving the basement of this block by taking 16 (sic) steps into the courtyard was like catharsis, or maybe being born again. I was also asked if I noticed how the steps leading to the basement of Block 11 were worn out, whether I also felt the smell of...death and fear, which can still be felt there nowadays. Did I feel the vibration of the stairs and walls leading to the cells, when other visitors were walking on the floor above? No, no and no! The fact of sense compensation is commonly known. We know that by losing one of the senses (in this case, hearing), others become more sensitive – perception of movement, the refraction of light, smells, the perception of surface vibrations. The deaf certainly perceive the world in a different way, but is it a better one? I am not able to say. It is undoubtedly "fuller". Those who are able to hear take the information provided by the guide for granted. This is how it was, how they did it, full stop. There is the message and the receipt of information. We hear "the gas was thrown inside" and we know that

a few minutes after light blue clods of diatomaceous earth saturated with hydrogen cyanide fell down, people in the gas chamber would suffocate in terrible agony. The deaf, having read “the gas was thrown inside” would say that there is a mistake as gas cannot be thrown inside as it is the same as air – invisible, light, just like the air in a balloon. Clods are not gas, they are poison. “Gassing” is a process which has to be presented to the deaf in detailed sign language and it must be explained clearly. The task is hard and requires a lot of creativity.

Another thing that my deaf visitors always notice and share between one another during their visit to the Auschwitz Museum, and which undoubtedly creates a dissonance between the cruel past and the present in this place, is the tidiness and order! My pupils always pay attention to this. Thousands of visitors, the place where over a million people perished, and yet impeccable tidiness and order. The deaf will pick up each piece of paper, each bottle cap, each ticket, all so as not to disturb this harmonious state.

A visit of the deaf constitutes a great challenge for Museum staff. What does this type of visit involve? First of all, one must overcome our aversion towards this disability. The state of a “privileged” group should definitely be avoided. The hearing-impaired are very loyal recipients of historical content, provided that the message is adjusted to suit the perceptive capabilities of the group. It should be possible for the interpreters or ourselves (as we already know sign language) to adapt the form of communication to the “level” of a given group. One should not hide their emotions. Each manifestation of insincerity will be immediately noticed by deaf visitors.

There are no inappropriate questions for the deaf. This may cause some problems, but it is worth bearing in mind that this results, to a large extent, from the limitations of sign language. There may be questions that those who can hear lack the courage to ask in their groups, which the hearing-impaired will happily ask. Such topics include feelings of embarrassment among inmates, degraded people who had to get rid of the shame of nudity, and of their bodily imperfections of their bodies as

a result of natural processes. They also pose questions concerning how inmates dealt with basic physiological and sexual needs, theft, lying or murder.

If we are afraid of some questions, or too embarrassed to ask them, we can be sure that deaf visitors will ask them. There is nothing inappropriate about it. The directness of their questions is due to restrictions in their language. Easy questions about difficult issues. They will ask what the guide thinks about a given topic, if they agree with one thing or the other. They will check whether they are really interested in the subject or if they are just doing their job.

While working with the hearing-impaired, we need to remember that our work as educators or guides will always be assessed. A visit to the Museum with the deaf always constitutes a specific test for a staff member. The most difficult issue for a guide is that – despite being the link between victims, history, place, crime and group – they will always play a secondary role. Irrespective of the guide's skills, the interpreter becomes their mouth. Only mutual co-operation between guide-educators and interpreters will allow full and optimal receipt of the content shared.

It is very valuable for both sides to meet beforehand in order to discuss such details as the number of facts shared, the pace of the visit, the order in which the exhibitions are presented or the presentation of facts. It is also of great importance to make the staff aware of the technical aspects of a visit of people with hearing disabilities. It is necessary to remember to always face the group and, for example, not to talk about something while showing it in their hand and turning their head in another direction. After all, some people with hearing disabilities can lip-read. It is similar with a group standing with their faces directed towards the sun. In order to understand something, a deaf person must see it.

The reward for perseverance and willingness to put all this information into practice will be that there will be no end to the deaf visitors' praise. Please believe me that, in spite of being somehow put to one side during the tour, when the visit comes to its end, the deaf will remain full of gratitude for their compassion and devotion. They will appreciate each

gesture as being some kind of gift from the guide. It is always a beautiful moment when the guide uses one of the signs to say hello or goodbye. Even an inept attempt will always be appreciated! Always! This makes it possible to overcome the distance and ensures much better co-operation.

The deaf build their knowledge of the world on concrete things, usually on images and gained experiences. With this in mind, on my initiative internships in specific professions (carpentry and conservation) were organised for the deaf. It was in June (2018) that, for the first time in history of the Museum in Oświęcim, and probably for the very first time in history, young people with hearing disabilities appeared in museum workshops. Excellent perception of details, exceptional precision and great perseverance at work make these young people with hearing impairments extremely good specialists. During the classes, my pupils dealt with the renovation of a bookshelf and the construction of benches which are situated directly within the former camp premises – along the so-called Birch Alley (*Alei Brzóz*). It might seem that being young means only having fun and expressing some irresponsible behaviours. It turns out that one could not be more wrong. When the internships came to an end, in the presence of the Museum Director, I was able to say with full openness and emotion that my apprentices had changed from boys to real and responsible men within a few days. Boys who knew that, during the war, they would have been inevitably sent to death only because of their hearing disability. The perfidious character of history lies in the fact that they helped to save the artefacts in a place that, in those monstrous times, would have led them from the ramp directly to the gas chambers. My pupils, being aware of these facts, performed their professional tasks with even greater diligence.

One more unprecedented event took place during the internships. Our deaf students were particularly honoured by the opportunity to take part in the ceremony commemorating the arrival of the first transport of Poles to KL Auschwitz. Another special thing happened here – for the first time in history, the entire ceremony was interpreted into sign language. This is an extremely important matter. The openness of

the Museum management and employees towards this issue resounded all over the world. In spite of some initial confusion (we were, as usual, surreptitiously observed), hearing-impaired young people could fully participate in the commemorative events, contributing to the history of this unique place. History in their world of silence, where silence can mean more than a thousand words.

# Bibliography (selection)

- Adamska, Jolanta. „Muzea – miejsca pamięci w oczach młodzieży. Omówienie rezultatów ankietyzacji przeprowadzonej w 1994 r. przez Radę Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa.” *Przeszłość i pamięć*, 1(2) (1997), pp. 8–13.
- Adorno, Theodor. „Wychowanie po Oświęcimiu.” *Znak*, 285(3) (1978), p. 47.
- Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Jolanta. „Attitudes of Young Poles toward Jews in Post-1989 Poland.” *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures*, 14(3) (2000), pp. 565–596.
- . „Świadomość Holokaustu wśród młodzieży polskiej po zmianach systemowych 1989 roku.” *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010*, eds. F. Tych, M. Adamczyk-Garbowska. Lublin, 2011, pp. 625–658.
- . „<<...wobec rozmiarów Zagłady świat doświadczył ogromnej winy...>> Debaty wokół nauczania o Holokauście.” *Studia nad Autorytaryzmem i Totalitaryzmem*, 38(2) (2016), pp. 19–33.
- Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Jolanata and Leszek Hońdo, eds. *Dlaczego należy uczyć o Holokauście?* Kraków, 2005.
- Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Jolanta and Robert Szuchta. “The intricacies of education about the Holocaust in Poland. Ten years after the Jedwabne debate, what can Polish school students learn about the Holocaust in history classes?” *Intercultural Education*, 25(4) (2014), pp. 283–299.

- Ausz, Mariusz Joanna Bugajska-Więclawska, Andrzej Stępnik, Dariusz Szewczuk, eds. *Turystyka w edukacji historycznej i obywatelskiej*. Lublin, 2017.
- Baranowski, Julian. *Zigeunerlager in Litzmannstadt 1941–1942*. Łódź, 2003.
- Barnes, Colin and Geof Mercer. *Disability*. Cambridge, 2002.
- Bartuś, Alicja. „Edukacja w miejscu pamięci Auschwitz w świetle ankiety przeprowadzonych wśród małopolskich uczniów w 2016 roku.” *Dzieci wojny*, ed. A. Bartuś. Oświęcim, 2016, pp. 271–289.
- . „Wizyta w Auschwitz – element budowy pamięci zbiorowej o wydarzeniach z przeszłości czy punkt wyjścia do edukacji o współczesności? Zarys problemu.” *Historia – Pamięć – Tożsamość w edukacji humanistycznej*. Vol. III: *Pamięć człowieka, pamięć miejsca, miejsca pamięci*. *Studia Historyczno-Antropologiczne*, eds. B. Popiołek, A. Chłosta-Sikorska, A. Słaby. Kraków, 2015, pp. 163–177.
- Berbeka, Jadwiga, ed. *Turystyka martyrologiczna w Polsce na przykładzie Państwowego Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau*. Kraków, 2012.
- Berecka, Marta and Tomasz Kobylański. *Auschwitz a postrzeganie współczesnego świata. Opis projektu i wyniki badań ankietowych*, 2018 [materials shared by the authors].
- Bilewicz, Michał, Marta Witkowska, Silviana Stubig, Marta Beneda and Roland Imhoff. “How to Teach about the Holocaust? Psychological Obstacles in Historical Education in Poland and Germany.” *History Education and Conflict Transformation: Social Psychological Theories, History Teaching and Reconciliation*, eds. C. Psaltis, M. Carretero, S. Čehajić-Clancy, Cham, 2017, pp. 169–197.
- Bilewicz, Michał and Adrian Dominik Wójcik. “Visiting Auschwitz: Evidence of secondary traumatization among high school students.” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 88(3) (2018), pp. 328–334.
- Bottini, Roberto, Davide Crepaldi, Daniel Casasanto, Virgine Crollen and Olivier Colligno. “Space and Time in the Child’s Mind: Evidence for a Cross-Dimensional Asymmetry.” *Cognitive Science*, 34 (2010), pp. 387–405.

- . “Space and time in sighted and blind people.” *Cognition*, 141 (2015), pp. 67–72.
- Chmielewska Katarzyna and Alina Molisak (eds.). *Pomnik pamięci. Miejsca niepamięci*, Warszawa. 2017.
- Dorner, Birgit. „Bilder der Verführung – Bilder der Erinnerung – gestaltete Bilder, Kunstpädagogik in der Gedenkstättenarbeit”, *Arbeit an Bildern der Erinnerung, Ästhetische Praxis, außerschulische Jugendbildung und Gedenkstättenpädagogik*, eds. B. Dorner and K. Engelhardt. Stuttgart, 2006, p. 7.
- Foucault, Michel. *History of Madness*. London, 2006.
- . *Inne przestrzenie*. „Teksty Drugie” 6 (2005), pp. 117–125.
- Gross, Magdalena H. “Struggling to deal with the difficult past: Polish students confront the Holocaust.” *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 46(4) (2014), pp. pp. 441–463.
- Grzegorzcyk, Andrzej and Piotr Wąsowicz. *Obóz zagłady Kulmhof w Chełmnie nad Nerem. Przewodnik po Miejscu Pamięci*. Chełmno nad Nerem, 2016, pp. 43–45.
- Kajda, Kornelia, Tomasz Michalik and Dawid Kobialka. „Heritage for All. A Contribution to the Inclusion of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Archaeology: A Polish Perspective.” *Current Swedish Archaeology*, 23 (2015), pp. 131–156.
- Kranz, Tomasz. *Edukacja historyczna w miejscach pamięci*. Lublin, 2002.
- . „Pedagogika pamięci.” *Pro Memoria*, 23 (2005), p. 67.
- . *Zbrodnie Nazizmu w świadomości i edukacji historycznej w Polsce i Niemczech*. Lublin, 1998, p. 21.
- Kucia, Marek. *Auschwitz jako fakt społeczny. Historia, współczesność i świadomość społeczna KL Auschwitz w Polsce*. Kraków, 2005.
- . „Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów.” *Pro Memoria*, 16 (2001), pp. 17–26.
- . „KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów.” *Pro Memoria*, 27 (2007), pp. 99–108.
- . *KL Auschwitz w percepcji polskich uczniów. Komunikat z badań*. Kraków, 2005 [typescript].

- . „KL Auschwitz w świadomości społecznej współczesnych Polaków.” *Pro Memoria*, 15 (2001), pp. 31–44.
- . *Opinie polskich uczniów na temat obozu Auschwitz A.D. 2000*. vol. 1: Raport zbiorczy, vol. 2: Zbiorcze wyniki ankiet, vol. 3: Tabele aneksowe, vol. 4: Zapisy odpowiedzi na pytania otwarte ankiety, vol. 5: Zapisy wywiadów grupowych. Kraków, 2000 [typescript].
- . Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w opinii zwiedzających. *Pro Memoria* 20 (2003), pp. 49–54.
- Kula, Marcin. *Między przeszłością a przyszłością. O pamięci, zapomnianiu i przewidywaniu*. Poznań, 2004, p. 80.
- Kwiatkowski, Piotr Tadeusz. „Czy lata III Rzeczypospolitej były ‘czasem pamięci’? Pamięć zbiorowa jako czynnik integracji i źródło konfliktów”, ed. A. Szpociński. Warszawa, 2009, pp. 131–134.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors in Our Lives*. London, 2003.
- Lausch-Żuk, Jolanta. „Pedagogika osób z umiarkowanym, znacznym i głębokim upośledzeniem umysłowym”, *Pedagogika specjalna*, ed. W. Dykcik, Poznań, 2001.
- Kranz Tomasz, ed. *Muzea w poobozowych miejscach pamięci. Tożsamość, znaczenia, funkcje*. Lublin 2017.
- Nawrocik, Jacek and Renata Wełniak, eds. *Wielkopolskie w obozie karno-śledczym w Żabikowie*, Luboń, 2017.
- Nowak, Anna. „Uczestnictwo osób niepełnosprawnych w kulturze.” *Chowanna* 1 (2015), pp. 91–102.
- Oleksy, Krystyna. „Centrum Edukacji w Miejscu Pamięci i Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau.” ed. K. Dethlefsen. *Pamięć i upamiętnianie – o znaczeniu edukacji historyczno-politycznej w polsko-niemieckiej wymianie młodzieży*, Poczdam-Warszawa, 2003, pp. 184–185.
- Owsiński, Marcin, “Die Biographieerzählung als museumspädagogische Leitlinie des Museums Stutthof. Bisherige Erfahrungen und Zukunftpläne.” eds. B. Dybaś, I. Nöbauer, L. Radonic. *Auschwitz im Kontext. Die ehemaligen Konzentrationslager im gegenwärtigen europäischen Gedächtnis*, Frankfurt-am-Main. 2017, pp. 89–105.

- . „Programme ‘Ostatni świadkowie’ i wystawa ‘Świadkowie generacji’ w Muzeum Stutthof. Głos w dyskusji na temat misji miejsc pamięci w XXI wieku.” *Od Westerplatte do Norymbergi. II wojna światowa we współczesnej historiografii, muzealnictwie i edukacji. Materiały z Konferencji w Muzeum Stutthof w dniach 2–5 września 2009 roku*. Sztutowo, 2009, pp. 364–368.
- . (Z)rozumienie historii (*Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie*), eds. M. Fabiszak, M. Owsiański, *Obóz-Muzeum. Trauma we współczesnym wystawiennictwie*, Kraków, 2013, pp. 81–95.
- . ed. *Pamiętamy, pamiętam... Pomorza Gdańskie i obóz Stutthof 1939–1945. Materiały edukacyjne*, Sztutowo-Warszawa, 2012.
- Kranz, Tomasz, ed. *Pedagogika pamięci. O teorii i praktyce edukacji w muzeach martyrologicznych*, Lublin, 2018.
- Ploch, Leszek. „Dyskryminacja osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną.” *Student niepełnosprawny. Szkice i rozprawy*, 11 (2018), pp. 185–201.
- Praga, Agnieszka. „Rola i znaczenie pamięci o KL Auschwitz-Birkenau w edukacji historycznej Polaków i Niemców. Konfrontacja pamięci indywidualnej z doświadczeniem miejsca.” *Załącznik Kulturoznawczy*, 1 (2014), pp. 541–660.
- Różycka, R. „Art-terapia”, *Terapia zabawą. Terapia przez sztukę*, ed. M. Piszczek. Warszawa, 2002, p. 95.
- Sala, Krzysztof. „Polityka społeczna wobec osób niepełnosprawnych w Polsce.” *Wrocławskie Studia Politologiczne*, 21 (2016), pp. 83–84.
- Sendyka, Roma. „Miejsca, które straszą (afekty i nie-miejsca pamięci).” *Teksty Drugie*, 1 (2014), pp. 84–102.
- Sherwin, Byron L. *Duchowe dziedzictwo Żydów polskich*. Warszawa, 1995.
- Skarżyńska, Krystyna, Kamil Przybyła and Adrian Dominik Wójcik. „Grupowa martyrologia: psychologiczne funkcje przekonań o narodowej krzywdzie.” *Psychologia Społeczna*, vol. 7, 4(23) (2012), pp. 335–352.
- Stec, Katarzyna. „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci dla współczesnego młodego człowieka – doświadczenie edukacyjne czy turystyczne.”

- Auschwitz i Holokaust. Edukacja w szkole i w miejscu pamięci*, ed. P. Trojański, Oświęcim, 2014, pp. 287–297.
- . „Symbolika i znaczenie miejsc pamięci utworzonych na terenach byłych obozów koncentracyjnych i zagłady z perspektywy współczesnego młodego człowieka.” *Antysemityzm, Holokaust, Auschwitz w badaniach społecznych*, ed. M. Kucia, Kraków, 2011, pp. 37–54.
- Stępnik, Andrzej. „Rola wizyty w muzeum-miejscu pamięci z punktu widzenia dydaktyka historii.” ed. T. Kranz, *Wizyty edukacyjne w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Poradnik dla nauczycieli*, Lublin, 2012, pp. 51–63.
- Sztumski, Janusz. *Wstęp do metod i technik badań społecznych*. Warszawa, 1984.
- Tanaś, Sławoj. *Przestrzeń turystyczna cmentarzy. Wstęp do tanatoturystyki*. Łódź, 2009.
- . *Tanatoturystyka. Od przestrzeni śmierci do przestrzeni turystycznej*. Łódź, 2013.
- Trojański, Piotr, ed. *Auschwitz i Holokaust. Edukacja w szkole i miejscu pamięci*, Oświęcim, 2014.
- Trojański, Piotr, ed. *Auschwitz i Holokaust: dylematy i wyzwania polskiej edukacji*, Oświęcim, 2008.
- Wełniak, Renata, ed. *Niemiecki obóz zagłady Kulmhof. Materiały dydaktyczne dla nauczycieli*. vol. 1, Żabikowo, 2015.
- Wełniak, Renata, ed. *Obozy pracy przymusowej dla Żydów w Wielkopolsce. Materiały dydaktyczne dla nauczycieli*, vol. 2, Luboń, 2016.
- Wierzbicka, Anna Maria. *Architektura miejsc pamięci jako forma strukturyzująca doświadczenia zbiorowe na przykładzie obiektów świadectwa Holokaustu*. Kraków, 2011.
- Wilson, Margaret. “Six Views of Embodied Cognition.” *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*, 9 (2002), pp. 625–636.
- Witkowska, Marta and Michał Bilewicz. „Czy prawda nas wyzwoli? Przełamywanie oporu psychologicznego w przyjmowaniu wiedzy o Zagładzie.” *Zagłada Żydów. Studia i materiały* 10 (2014), pp. 803–822.

- Witkowska, Marta, Anna Stefaniak and Michał Bilewicz. „Stracone szanse? Wpływ polskiej edukacji o Zagładzie na postawy wobec Żydów.” *Psychologia Wychowawcza*, 5 (2014), pp. 147–159.
- Wójcik, Adrian and Michał Bilewicz, *Oświećmy inaczej. Ewaluacja warsztatów antydyskryminacyjnych*. Warszawa, 2012.
- Wójcik-Dudek, Małgorzata. *W(y)czytać Zagładę. Praktyki postpamięci w polskiej literaturze XXI wieku dla dzieci i młodzieży*. Katowice, 2016.
- Wysok, Wiesław. „Teoretyczne założenia pedagogiki pamięci. Wokół podstawowych definicji i pojęć.” ed. T. Kranz, *Pedagogika pamięci. O teorii i praktyce edukacji w muzeach martyrologicznych*, Lublin, 2018, pp. 100–102.
- . „Wokół problematyki uwarunkowań i efektów edukacji w muzeum upamiętnienia.” *Zeszyty Majdanka*, vol. 26 (2014), pp. 311–340.
- Zakrzewska, Monika and Monika Zima-Parjaszewska. „Niepełnosprawność intelektualna – życie i prawo.” *Szkolenia Narodowego Instytutu Muzealnictwa i Ochrony Zbiorów*, 7 (2015), pp. 14–16.
- Żuk, Grzegorz. „Refleksja w miejscu pamięci. Badania empiryczne wśród uczestników lekcji muzealnych w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku.” ed. W. Wysok, *Edukacja pozaszkolna w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku. Jak przygotować, przeprowadzić i podsumować zajęcia dla uczniów*. Lublin, 2014, pp. 103–109.
- Żuraw, Hanna. *Udział osób niepełnosprawnych w życiu społecznym*. Warszawa, 2008.
- Żurek, Sławomir J. „Zagłada w najnowszej polskiej literaturze dla dzieci i młodzieży.” *Teksty Drugie*, 2 (2017), pp. 184–194.

This publication constitutes the aftermath of the international conference recapitulating the Polish and Dutch education project titled “The Future of the Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in Authentic Memorial Sites”, which was held in Oświęcim on 10-12 October 2018. It is divided into three parts entitled: “Challenges”, “Perspectives”, and “Good Practices”. The first one is an introduction – it contains texts written by museum experts representing authentic memorial sites. The second part of the book presents various research perspectives on education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust: social, ethic and that related to Polish Studies. The third one presents examples of good practices – educational projects implemented in the Auschwitz Memorial. We hope that this publication will inspire a discussion about the future of the education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in authentic memorial sites.

**Bartosz Bartyzel**  
**Piotr Tarnowski**  
**Małgorzata Grzanka**  
**Joanna Podolska**  
**Marek Kucia**  
**Katarzyna Stec**  
**Alicja Bartuś**

**Agnieszka Kasperek**  
**Adam Musiał**  
**Gabriel Dittrich**  
**Tomasz Michalik**  
**Marcin Owsiniński**  
**Ewa Guziak**  
**Piotr Kondratowicz**

ISBN 978-83-7704-283-0

