

PhD THESIS SUMMARY

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Title: Activities of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in the years 2005-2019.

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The aim of the work is to present the activities of the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust in the years 2005-2019. The time range was not chosen by chance. The ICEAH was established in 2005, and at the end of 2019 it was moved to a new location, which expanded the scope of its capabilities. The work has been divided into five chapters, three of which focus exclusively on the history and functioning of the ICEAH. The first two summarize the current state of knowledge about the education of Memorial Sites and the history of educational activity at the museum from the beginning of its creation. This aspect could not be overlooked, as some educational projects were started before 2005.

In the first chapter, I discuss the concepts of Pedagogy of Remembrance and Pedagogy of Memorial Sites. Due to the translation, there are two terms in Polish. Gedenkstättenpädagogik was born in the late 1950s in Germany. The Pedagogy of Remembrance is related to the activities of museums established in the areas of former concentration and extermination camps. In terms of science, Tomasz Kranz, the current director of the Museum at Majdanek, contributed significantly to its development. In this chapter, I discuss all the major educational reforms carried out in Poland after the end of World War II. I describe in detail the issues and topics related to the Holocaust included in the core curriculum. It is surprising that until the 1990s, the term Holocaust did not appear in school textbooks, although the extermination of the Jewish population was presented. This also affected the results of surveys conducted among students at the museum in the 1960s. A definite minority knew the term. Education in Poland has undergone many reforms. There were also completely new items. Just like the History and Society subject introduced in 2008 in a secondary school. The heritage of epochs in which it was decided to move away from chronological teaching. Students learned selected thematic threads. The survey conducted on school youth shows that their knowledge of World War II is still not satisfactory. The research was carried out in 2017 at the time of the last major reform of education, when two

groups of students, graduates of primary and lower secondary schools, met in the first classes of the secondary schools. The described chapter also draws attention to the complicated symbolism of Auschwitz. This place takes on a different dimension and meaning for each nation whose representatives died in the camp. For example, for Roma, Auschwitz will always mean extermination, while Russians equate it with the tragedy of Soviet prisoners of war.

The second chapter describes the educational activity of the Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau until 2005. After the liberation of KL Auschwitz, a decision was made very quickly that a museum would be established in its place. The official opening took place on June 14, 1947, on the seventh anniversary of the first transport of prisoners to the camp. The beginnings were not easy for many reasons. The situation began to stabilize gradually, especially from 1955, when Kazimierz Smoleń became the director of the museum. He held this position for nearly forty years. There was an increasing development of educational activities. Initially, the focus was primarily on guiding groups. On February 20, 1956, the Scientific and Educational Department was launched. Its management was entrusted to a former prisoner, Tadeusz Szymański. Started, among others develop cooperation with other institutions, including foreign ones. In 1967, Emeryka Iwaszko took over the function of the head of the department. Gradually, separate sections, such as the exhibition section, began to be separated. A breakthrough in the education of Memorial Sites was the organization of four international conferences, to which a wide range of experts were invited. Three of them took place in the 1970s, and the last one after the political changes in Poland, in 1990. The important role of teachers was also noticed very quickly. For this reason, more and more educational programs began to be addressed to educators. The possibilities of the museum significantly increased after the collapse of the space system in Poland. Collaboration has been established with with the US and Israel. In 1998, the extremely innovative postgraduate studies "Totalitarianism - Nazim - Holocaust" were launched, the main goal of which was to gather a group of people dealing with the subject of the Holocaust in Poland. The program of studies and their implementation are described in detail in the fourth chapter. From January 1, 2000, the Scientific and Educational Department was renamed the Education Center. Efforts were still made to create an increasingly richer educational offer for groups visiting the museum. An important goal was also to attract a group of lecturers and scientists dealing with the Holocaust.

Fulfilling the will of the former prisoners of the camp, who wanted to leave a kind of testament, on January 27, 2005, the Founding Act of the International Center for Education

about Auschwitz and the Holocaust was signed. The establishment of a new institution, which took over the tasks of the former Education Center, was supposed to be an opportunity for the development of the museum, but also of the city of Oświęcim itself. The ICEAH was headed by Krystyna Oleksy, then deputy director of the Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau, who was replaced by Andrzej Kacorzyk after her retirement in 2012. The main mission of the ICEAH is to promote world peace and promote tolerance. In order to fulfill this mission, many tasks are carried out. Efforts are being made to expand cooperation with other institutions around the world, which allows for the implementation of joint projects and the exchange of experience. ICEAH employees also organize numerous conferences, lectures, exhibitions, museum lessons and study stays. The e-learning section is also more and more active. All undertaken initiatives treat the Holocaust as a model of universal genocide, which is why it is often a starting point for discussions on other crimes committed in the 20th century. Years of experience have shown that a visit to the Memorial itself is not effective enough. It is worth enriching it with educational activities that will allow for free discussion and exchange of experiences. Appropriate workshops allow you to understand the emotions that arose during the tour. This is especially important for young people who should not be left alone after experiencing the authentic space of the former concentration and extermination camp. This is where the important role of Memorial Site educators is visible. This profession was born with the development of Remembrance Pedagogy. The work of an educator involves not only teaching, but also, to a large extent, office work. Each implemented project and undertaking requires longer preparations beforehand. The structure of the ICEAH was reformed in 2013. It currently consists of six sections and a library. An important consultative and advisory body is the ICEAH Council, which is formed by ten representatives of the world of science, appointed by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage. The first council became operational on October 11, 2005. The next step in expanding the activities of the ICEAH was the creation of a new seat. The efforts lasted nearly 12 years. The prolonged renovation of the building was related to the lack of adequate finances and a misunderstanding between the management of the museum and the authorities of Oświęcim. Finally, at the end of 2019, the ICEAH could start its activities in a large and renovated building, the so-called of the Old Theatre. From the very beginning, the museum struggled with insufficient finances. Maintaining a huge area and dozens of museum buildings is not easy. This problem was largely solved thanks to the establishment of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation. It was an initiative of Piotr M. A. Cywiński, which he realized together with Jacek Kastelaniec and Władysław Bartoszewski.

Collecting perpetual capital allowed to generate profits that support the museum's activities, mainly conservation work, but also education.

The next chapter contains a detailed description of all the most important educational activities conducted by the ICEAH. Teachers are increasingly trying to organize study stays at the museum for their students. Ideally, each group coming to the museum could benefit from at least a debriefing workshop. The museum offers several types of sightseeing. You can choose ordinary lasting over three hours or definitely more advanced so-called. six- or eight-hour studio sessions. The ICEAH offers several dozen workshops, lectures and talks. This allows you to build even a few-day study stay. This solution was used for several years by students of the Public Secondary School No. III in Opole and students of the University of Opole, taking part in a joint trip. In this chapter, study stays are presented on their example. Surveys were conducted among the participants of the trips from the very beginning. This allowed for a thorough analysis of the individual points of the programme. There were no negative opinions in any survey. In recent years, students have chosen workshops as the most satisfying form of activity. The implementation of international projects is one of the most important tasks of the ICEAH. Over the years, we have managed to permanently establish cooperation with, among others: with the Yad Vashem Institute in Israel, the Terezin Memorial Site in the Czech Republic, the Anne Frank House in the Netherlands and the TKUMA center in Ukraine. Cooperation with the above-mentioned institutions consists primarily in the exchange of teachers and educators. A foreign group arrives at PMA-B, and then a Polish group leaves for a seminar at a given Memorial Site. The exchange with the Yad Vashem Institute has been functioning the longest. It made it possible to train a wide range of teachers in Poland. The ICEAH also runs a number of other projects. The "Teaching about the Holocaust" Summer School, which is addressed to everyone interested in the subject of the Holocaust, is highly appreciated. It has been organized every year since 2005. The interest is so great that, in addition to the English-language version, a German-language version has also been introduced since 2013. Nationwide projects are also being carried out. One of the most distinguished is "Auschwitz - history, civic education", initially addressed to prison service employees, and then also to the prisoners themselves. The ICEAH very often organizes conferences and thematic sessions. Some of them are described in detail in the fourth chapter. In recent years, the need to develop education using the Internet has increased. For this purpose, a separate e-learning section was created, which creates not only lessons, but also online courses. They have already created several dozen lessons, which are ready material for teachers during their classes.

The fifth chapter presents the activities of subsequent sections of the ICEAH. The work describes all the exhibitions in the museum in detail. The most important is the permanent exhibition, which was established in 1947. Then it was slightly rebuilt, but since 1955 it has been almost unchanged. In 2007, a decision was made to thoroughly renovate and rebuild it. The chapter presents all the most important guidelines that the exhibition section must follow when creating it. In addition to the permanent exhibition in the museum, national exhibitions are also important, which are also visited by visitors, especially the Jewish exhibition entitled "Shoah." ICEAH employees create temporary, traveling and online exhibitions. For several years, publications on the Holocaust, adapted to children and teenagers, began to appear on a larger scale. The work presents the most important of them. Batszewa Dagan was the first person who undertook to create publications on this difficult subject for children. Subsequently, camp-themed comics also began to be created, which turned out to be a great success. ICEAH employees regularly publish methodological guides and educational folders for teachers. They usually contain ready-made lesson plans. The ICEAH also has a section responsible for volunteering and internships. Volunteers are a huge support for the museum, which is why it was decided to establish the "If there were not ten..." award, which is presented annually to the most outstanding volunteers. Due to its wide range of activities, the museum offers the possibility of student or apprenticeship training in their institution. In 2012, the authorities of the Auschwitz-Birkenau introduced the "Light of Remembrance" award for those who devoted themselves in a special way to education for the Holocaust. Previous winners include: Władysław Bartoszewski, Krystyna Oleksy, AvnerShalev, SergeKlarsfeld and Sara Bloomfield. Their biographies and achievements in the field of education are described in this chapter.

The ICEAH has existed for several years, but it continues the work started in 1947. Over the decades of its operation, the museum has gone through various stages. The beginnings were especially difficult. Over the following years, it was possible to develop appropriate working methods that significantly developed the Pedagogy of Memorial Sites. The conducted research confirmed that the offered classes are of a high standard and bring the expected results. Participants of projects and study visits often admit that their stay at the Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau has changed their current outlook on life. Thus, the most important goal of the Pedagogy of Remembrance has been achieved.