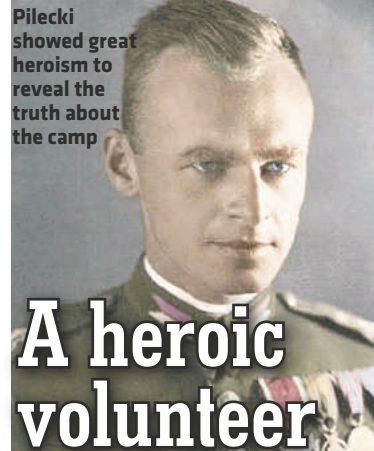


SURVIVORS FROM HELL

Foto PAP



A heroic volunteer

Witold Pilecki is one of the greatest heroes of World War II. In September 1940, he got himself arrested by the Germans in a round-up, even though he knew that the transport would be sent to Auschwitz. He was aware that he might die.

In the camp, he organized a conspiracy and passed on information about the

Blessed midwife

From April 1943 until the liberation, Stanisława Leszczyńska was a prisoner of Auschwitz, where she was sent with her daughter to help Jews. She managed to smuggle a midwife's diploma into the camp and got a work permit.

Despite the ban on German torturers and the death penalty that was threatening her,

she female prisoners with labor. Thanks to her, in these inhumane conditions, about 3,000 children were born. They had little chance to stay alive, but many managed to survive the war. Leszczyńska was indifferent regarding the mother's nationality. She saved Jewish children, despite the fact they were to be thrown in

the garbage. She discreetly marked the children intended for denationalization in German families so that they would be easy to find after the war. She wrote down her experiences in the „Report of a midwife from Oświęcim” published in the 1960s. The memories were used in the beatification process that started in 2010.



„This way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen”

Tadeusz Borowski paid for his participation in the conspiracy with a stay in concentration camps, incl. Auschwitz and Dachau, where he remained until liberation in 1945.



Before that, after taking up secret classes in Polish studies, he managed to make his debut as a poet. In the camp, he wrote poems and letters to his fiancée, later wife Maria Rundo, also staying in the Auschwitz camp. After liberation, before returning to Poland, he co-wrote the book “We Were in Auschwitz.” In

Poland, he joined the communists and became a publicist. Yet, the books brought him the greatest fame. In shocking stories, incl. „This way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen,” published in 1948 in the collections „A farewell to Maria” and „The World of Stone”, described the cruelty prevailing in the camp and the different attitudes of prisoners and torturers in a nightmarish reality. He died at the age of only 29, a few days after the birth of his daughter. Possibly he committed suicide.

Feminism icon

Simone Veil, coming from a family of assimilated French Jews, was only 17 years old when she was deported from Nice to Auschwitz in March 1944. She managed to survive but she lost her mother in the camp.

After the war, Simone returned to France, graduated from law school, and worked in politics for about 40 years. As the minister of health, she managed to pass a law allowing

for abortion at the woman's request and the reimbursement of contraceptives. In the years 1979–1982, she was the first female president of the European Parliament. She died at the age of 89 and was buried in the Pantheon - the Paris necropolis of the great French. The camp number 78 651 was engraved on her sarcophagus.



Noblista

Imre Kertész w 1944 r. jako 15-letni chłopiec został wywieziony do Auschwitz, później przeniesiono go do Buchenwaldu. Cała jego rodzina - oprócz matki - zginęła w czasie wojny.

Po wyzwoleniu wrócił na Węgry, został dziennikarzem i pisarzem, zajmował się także tłumaczeniami. Przechyca

obozowe miały decydujący wpływ na jego twórczość literacką. W swoich utworach nawiązywał do osobistych przeżyć i doświadczeń z czasów pobytu w obozach. W 2002 r. został laureatem Nagrody Nobla w dziedzinie literatury. Za „powieści, które przeciwstawiają osobiste doświadczenie jednostki brutalnym zrzędzeniom historii”. Jedną z jego najbardziej znanych powieści jest „Los utracony”. BL



It's worth being decent

18-year-old Władysław Bartoszewski was sent to Auschwitz on September 21, 1940, in the second transport from Warsaw. He was prisoner no. 4427.



He spent 199 days in the camp hell, after which he was released thanks to the intervention of the Polish Red Cross. After being released from the camp, Bartoszewski was a Home Army soldier, a participant in the Warsaw Uprising. He organized the „Żegota” Council to Aid Jews. After

the war, he collaborated with the Main Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes, where his information on Nazi crimes collected in the camp was used. In Stalinist times, after 1956 he was in prison. He was a publicist and opposition activist. In free Poland, he was twice the minister of foreign affairs. In 2009, thanks to Bartoszewski, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation was established. The outstanding professor died in 2015 at the age of 93.



The unforgettable head of the „Chłopów”

19-year-old August Kowalczyk became a prisoner of Auschwitz in December 1940. The number 6804 was tattooed on his forearm. Two years later, he took part in the first collective escape from the camp.

Out of the dozen or so escapees, only nine survived. Kowalczyk ended up in the Home Army and fought in guerrilla warfare. After the war he became an actor, he appeared in such blockbusters as

„More Than Life at Stake”, „Janosik” or „The Peasants”. However, he never recovered from the terrible war experiences. He believed that this evil cannot be forgotten. He was a co-founder of the construction of the Oświęcim hospice, which was established as a thank you to former prisoners of the camp for the inhabitants of Oświęcim for their help during the occupation. He died in a hospice at the age of 91.



Franciszek Gajowniczek, a prisoner of Auschwitz, was born for the second time when Fr. Maksymilian Kolbe voluntarily went to death by starvation for him.

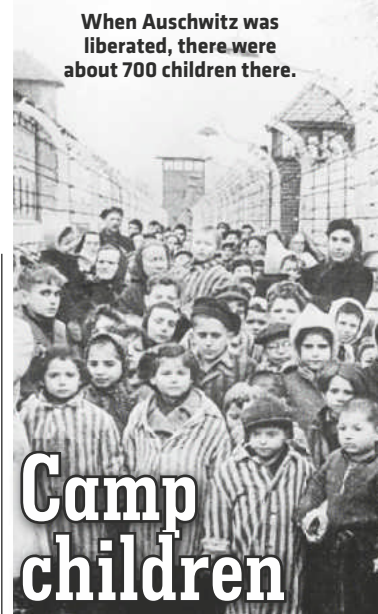
He survived thanks to Father Kolbe

Kolbe was a Franciscan, founder of monasteries in Niepokalanów near Warsaw, in China, and in Japan. After being arrested by the Gestapo, he was imprisoned in Pawiak, and in May 1941 he was sent to a concentration camp. He

was assigned to the commando of the well-known sadist Knott, who abused the priest in a special way, beating him until unconscious. In July 1941, after one of the prisoners had escaped, the camp commandant sentenced ten pe-

ople to death by starvation. Although it was not Father Maximilian, he volunteered and offered his life for the life of Franciszek Gajowniczek, a stranger to him. Kolbe died on August 14, exhausted by a phenol injection, as the last prisoner locked up in a starvation bunker. Gajowniczek survived the war, witnessed the

beatification process of Father Maksymilian, who was considered a saint shortly after his death. The beatification was performed by Paul VI in 1971, and the canonization by John Paul II in 1982.



Camp children

It is estimated that among at least 1.3 million people deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, there were about 232,000 children and adolescents under the age of 18. Most of them came with their families.

In the initial period, children born in the camp, regardless of their nationality, were put to death. From mid-1943, children born to women of non-Jewish origin were left alive, registered, and issued with numbers. As a rule, the children of Jewish women were put to death. At the time of liberation, there were at least 700 extremely exhausted children in the camp, including around 500 under the age of 15.

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