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Pilgrimages to Auschwitz

Auschwitz is the name of the largest Nazi concentration camp, and, at the same time, the largest mass-killing centre during World War II. Throughout the time of the camp's existence, i.e. from May 1940 until January 1945, its main aim was mass murder of people deported there. It was undertaken in two basic forms: indirect destruction – as a result of hunger and hard work, and direct destruction – in gas chambers. Direct mass killing, on a large scale, started in Auschwitz in mid -1942. At that time, in connection with the “Endlösung” action that is “the final solution to the Jewish question”, KL Auschwitz also began to function as a centre for the mass killing of European Jews.

In November 1943, the extending camp was divided into three parallel units: Auschwitz I (the main camp), Auschwitz II–Birkenau (the camp in Brzezinka) and Auschwitz III (the sub-camps near industrial plants). Auschwitz II–Birkenau was the largest of all these camps, and it was there that the mass killing of mainly the Jewish nation was undertaken.

A total of more than one million people perished in Auschwitz. Ninety percent of the victims of the camp were Jews, and their number reached approximately 965,000. Also approximately 75,000 Poles, 23,000 Gypsies, approximately 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war, and 12,000 people of other nations were murdered there. ¹

After the war, in order to commemorate the places and victims of the Nazi genocide, the martyrdom museum – the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau – was established on the area of the former Auschwitz camp.

The areas of the former camp are the world's largest graveyard without graves and a place of remembrance. They are of special symbolic significance to the nations whose members perished there in the largest numbers, that is Jews, Poles and Gypsies. Being a graveyard, this place has also become a destination for pilgrimages.

The term pilgrimage comes from the ancient times. The Greek term “per epi – demos” (foreigner, not resident) was used to describe a pilgrim or a passing-by

traveller. The Latin “peregrinus” means someone who “goes across the field” far away from his home. Now the term pilgrimage is used to describe a journey undertaken for religious motives, to a place considered as sacred, “locus sacer”, to perform certain religious acts of piety and penance there. Its aim is to reach the sacred place, and its essence is to encounter the sacred.²

In view of the classification of pilgrimages as a form of mass-scale tourism and the variety of motives behind the travel to a given centre of religious cult, pilgrimages, since the beginning of the 1960s, have been increasingly qualified as modes of “religious tourism”. Pilgrimages are a specific form of religious tourism. They are characterised by the religious motive which is in the foreground. Unlike other forms of travelling within religious tourism, each pilgrimage is at the same time one of the most important religious practices.³

The area of the former Auschwitz camp, now the Museum, is visited by people led by religious, religious/educational or educational motives. Focusing on the persons or rather the groups of people coming for religious motives mainly, we will present the pilgrimages of Christians, which are connected with St. Maksymilian Kolbe and St. Edith Stein, and the pilgrimages of Roma people cultivating their own tradition. Pilgrimages of Jews and the annual pilgrimage of an ecumenical group will also be described.

I. Pilgrimages of Christians

The pilgrimages of Christians to Oświęcim, which are of interest to us, are connected mainly with the cult of the martyr of Oświęcim, father Maksymilian Kolbe, who died considered to be a saint.

The cult of martyrs and their relics developed in Christianity in the 3rd century A.D. A martyr (Latin “martyr”, “martyrus” – ‘witness’) – is one who gave testimony to his faith by sacrificing his life. In Poland, the cult of those who died considered to be saints, especially those elevated to sainthood and the sacred places connected with them, originate in the beginnings of the Polish statehood. Considered the patrons of Poland, Saint Adalbert and Saint Stanislaw also died the deaths of martyrs. In a certain period of Christianity, the basis for a place to develop as a pilgrimage centre was for such a place to have a grave of a saint or his relics.⁴

In the Roman Catholic Church, there is a close relationship between pilgrimages and sanctuaries. The new canon law announced by John Paul II on 25 January 1983 defines the notion of a sanctuary as follows: A sanctuary means a church or another sacred place, to which – upon the approval of the local ordinary – numerous believers make pilgrimages, for the reason of a special piety.⁵ This means that next to churches, also chapels, altars, graveyards or particular graves therein, may be sanctuaries.

1. The cult of Saint Maksymilian Kolbe

Maksymilian Kolbe (born on 27 December 1894 in Zduńska Wola), a Conventual Franciscan, was the founder and the first Father Superior of the monastery in Niepokalanów, and the monastery in Nagasaki. On 28 May 1941, he was imprisoned at KL Auschwitz, where he received the camp number 16670. It was there that he gave his life for another inmate sent to death in a starvation chamber, Franciszek Gajowniczek (a father to a family). He died on 14 August 1941 in the death chamber of block 13 (later Block 11), his life being ended with a phenol injection. The preparations for his beatification commenced in 1948 (the so-called information process), and the beatification ceremony was performed on 17 October 1971 by Pope Paul VI.⁶ On 10 October 1982, John Paul II canonised father Maksymilian as a holy martyr.⁷

In Poland, there are three places connected with the cult of St. Maksymilian: Zduńska Wola (his birthplace), Niepokalanów (a centre established by St. Maksymilian) and Oświęcim (the place of his death).

1.1. Religious forms of the cult of St. Maksymilian Kolbe on the area of the Museum

Since the beatification, and especially the canonisation of father Maksymilian Kolbe, religious ceremonies have been organised on the area of the Museum to commemorate the anniversaries of his beatification (17 October), canonisation (10 October), and, above all, his death as a martyr (14 August).

Even before the official announcement of the beatification of father Maksymilian, in October 1971, a plaque with the inscription: "Homo-Homini" was unveiled on the wall of the "Death Block" (no. 11) to commemorate the 30th anniversary of his death. The ceremony was attended by Catholic clergy and secular people from Poland, England, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and West Germany.

On the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the beatification of father Maksymilian, more than 200,000 people arrived in Oświęcim. The Episcopate of Poland organised a holy mass on the area of the Museum, during which the Church was represented *inter alia* by Cardinal Jan Król of Philadelphia, Paule Bertoli (the Prefect of the Congregation for Beatification and Canonisation) and Józef Wrigt (the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy).

On 7 June 1979, during his first pilgrimage to Poland, John Paul II came to Oświęcim. Pilgrims from all over the world, mainly from Poland arrived there together with him. John Paul II visited then the death chamber of father Maksymilian, placed a candle therein and paid tribute to the place of death of the follower of Christ. During the solemn mass which he said on the area of the former camp in



Maksymilian Maria Kolbe

Brzezinka, the Pope dedicated a stone from the grave of St. Stanislaw Szczepanowski (from the Wawel Cathedral), as the cornerstone for the construction of the Father Maksymilian Maria Kolbe's Church – Memorial to the Martyrdom of Nations in Oświęcim. Of importance to this paper are the words spoken by John Paul II during the service in Brzezinka: "I am coming today as a pilgrim (...) to this special sanctuary in which – I can say – the patron of our difficult century was born, just like nine centuries ago Saint Stanislaw, the patron of Poles, was born at Skalka".

After the announcement of the canonisation of father Maksymilian, in the death chamber of block no. 11 Cardinal Franciszek Macharski unveiled and dedicated a commemorative plaque with the inscription: "In this chamber, on 14 August 1941, perished inmate no. 16670, a Polish priest – the Franciscan Maksymilian Maria Kolbe, beatified on 17.11.1971, and canonised on 10.10.1982". Also unveiled and dedicated was an image of St. Maksymilian and nine co-inmates who died together with him in that chamber. The cornerstone, dedicated by Pope John Paul II, for the construction of St. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe's Memorial Church in Oświęcim was also laid. Those ceremonies, which started with a joint prayer of the believers in the yard of Block 11, were attended by representatives of the Church from West Germany and Poland, Franciscans from Niepokalanów, and many delegations from Poland and abroad.

In 1992, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the death and the 20th anniversary of the beatification of father Maksymilian Kolbe, the Catholic Church initiated the "maximilian" ceremonies which continued until 1994 – the 100th anniversary of the Saint's birth.

In connection with these anniversary ceremonies, a solemn mass was said at the Museum, by the Wall of Death, on 14 August 1992. It was attended by Franciscans from all over the world, from countries such as Italy, USA, Germany, Japan, Peru, and pilgrims from Poland and abroad. During the ceremonies, at the place from which inmate no. 16670 M. Kolbe stepped forward to sacrifice his life to save another inmate, a commemorative plaque was placed. In 1994, which was pronounced "the year of Kolbe", approximately a thousand people arrived at the mass organised on 14 August by the "Wall of Death".

The religious ceremonies held at the Museum to commemorate the martyr's death of St. Maksymilian and his canonisation are usually attended by representatives of the highest authorities of the Church in Poland, clergy from abroad (particularly from Germany), clergy and monks (above all Franciscan monks), delegations from parishes and archdioceses whose patron is St. Maksymilian, representatives of embassies, local government authorities, the management of the Museum, representatives of various organisations whose activities are connected with Oświęcim, and pilgrims from Poland and abroad. The Museum does not register the persons participating in these ceremonies. Their number is estimated in the hundreds or thousands.

The programme of these ceremonies usually includes:

- a solemn mass said by the “Wall of Death” in the yard of Block 11;
- the placing of flowers by the “Wall of Death”;
- a prayer and the placing of flowers in the death chamber of Block 11;
- the placing of flowers in the roll-call yard by the plaque commemorating St. Maksymilian.

Pilgrims visit the death chamber of Block 11 not only in connection with the anniversary ceremonies but throughout the year as well. Pilgrims from nearby parishes and those on their way to or from Wadowice, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Cracow or Częstochowa come here. Most of these groups come to Oświęcim by coaches.⁸

There is no formal status of the routes obligatory to the organisers of pilgrimages, although church authorities often recommend some specific routes. It has been assumed for a few years now that the routes of the pilgrimages, beside their destination, which is usually Jasna Góra, have to include other sanctuaries as well. These are usually centres of international, national and supraregional significance. The number of routes leading pilgrims to Oświęcim is probably large, as the organisers of pilgrimages, taking into consideration the recommendations of the church authorities, finally determine their routes themselves.⁹

Since Poland's two largest pilgrimage destinations, Częstochowa and Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, are relatively close to Oświęcim, the pilgrims arriving there quite often visit Oświęcim as well. A particularly high inflow of them is noted in August. In that month the greatest Marian ceremonies both at Jasna Góra and in Kalwaria Zebrzydowska are held.

Pilgrims coming to Oświęcim in groups are usually accompanied by a priest. They do not register at the Museum, do not visit its area, but go to the death chamber of St. Maksymilian, where they pray together. These arrivals are of exclusively religious character.¹⁰ The death chamber of St. Maksymilian is also visited on religious tourist trips and by persons coming to the Museum for educational motives only.

1.2. St. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe's Memorial Church in Oświęcim¹¹

The cornerstone for the construction of St. Maksymilian Maria Kolbe's Memorial Church in Oświęcim was dedicated by John Paul II on 7 June 1979 during the mass which he said in Brzezinka. The construction of the church commenced in 1980 and was completed in 1988. The main sponsor of the project was the Catholic parish from Auerbach in Bayern (Germany).

The Memorial Church was consecrated on 9 October 1988 by Cardinal Franciszek Macharski. The ceremonies included a joint saying of the Litany of All Saints by the Wall of Death at the Museum, a joint prayer for those murdered at KL Auschwitz by the death cell, and the walking to the Memorial Church which was consecrated during a mass. Still during the construction of the Memorial Church, ceremonies devoted to St. Maksymilian commenced – above all celebrations of the successive anniversaries of his canonisation and death. These usually include:

- a joint prayer, sometimes also a holy mass on the area of the Museum;
- a joint prayer by the death chamber of St. Maksymilian;
- a holy mass at St. Maksymilian's Church.

These ceremonies are attended by representatives of the church authorities from Poland and Germany, monks of various orders, diocese clergy, delegations from 10 parishes and the Cracow archdiocese whose patron is St. Maksymilian, representatives of the German organisation Maksymilian Kolbe Werk, former camp inmates and pilgrims from Poland, and above all from Germany. As a result of the close contacts between the St. Maksymilian parish and German Catholics, large groups of German pilgrims come to the Memorial Church to the ceremonies connected with St. Maksymilian.

During the year, and particularly in October, the St. Maksymilian parish organises special retreat meditations, rosary prayers, holy masses devoted to the victims of KL Auschwitz and all those murdered in concentration camps, lagers and places of mass torture. Every year, between 10 and 30 October, a rosary prayer and a holy mass are said daily for those murdered at the Auschwitz camp. Each day they are said for representatives of a different nation murdered there. The flag on the church indicates the nationality of the inmates for whom the prayers are said on a given day. The Sobriety Fraternity at the parish organises the Way of the Cross to the death chamber of St. Maksymilian.

At St. Maksymilian's Church – “a memorial to the victims of the former camp, martyrs of many creeds, nations and languages”, there are objects of cult connected with the Auschwitz camp. To the right of the altar there is an urn with the ashes of some of its victims. Almost the whole front of the church is filled with a large stain glass with the central scene depicting Jesus Christ Resurrected, with St. Maksymilian and St. Edith Stein. In 1994, during the solemn mass to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth and the 12th anniversary of the canonisation of St.

Maksymilian, the relics – the rosary of St. Maksymilian with which he prayed at the camp and a small mug which he used as the mass chalice – were placed on the altar. These items had been kept by inmate no. 1126, Wilhelm Źelazny.

1.3. The St. Maksymilian Centre of the Franciscans in Oświęcim – Harmęże

Beginning in 1987, the Cracow Province of the Franciscan Order made attempts to get a permission for establishing a monastery in Oświęcim. It was finally decided that the future monastery, which was to become one of the elements of the centre for prayers and commemoration of St. Maksymilian, would be built in the village of Harmęże which is part of the Oświęcim administrative district, and where there was an Auschwitz sub-camp in 1941 – 1945. In Harmęże, by decree of the Cracow archbishop Franciszek Macharski of 20 October 1990, the parish of Immaculate Conception was founded and entrusted to the Franciscans of the Cracow Province of St. Anthony and blessed Jakub Strzemię.¹²

The first Franciscans came to Harmęże in 1989. On the day of Our Lady of Częstochowa, 26 August 1990, the Provincial of the Order father Z. Gogla dedicated the cross and the site for the construction of the church. The Church of Immaculate Conception was dedicated as early as on 28 May 1993, on the 52nd anniversary of the placing of St. Maksymilian in the camp. The ceremony was attended *inter alia* by Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual from Rome father Lafranco Serrini, representatives of the Order from Poland, England, Germany, Bohemia, Slovakia, as well as believers from the Bielsko-Biała-Żywiec diocese.¹³

As early as in August 1993, the ceremonies to commemorate the martyr's death of St. Maksymilian, organised on the area of the Museum, were concluded in the new church in Harmęże. Now the Franciscans from Harmęże, together with the Museum and the St. Maksymilian parish, co-organise ceremonies devoted to St. Maksymilian.

In the church in Harmęże (like in St. Maksymilian's Church in Oświęcim) there are objects of cult connected with the Auschwitz camp. In the main altar there is a painting of the Virgin Mary, before which young Kolbe prayed during his education in the Franciscan secondary school in Lvov (1907–1910). And in an aisle chapel one can see copies of the figure of Our Lady of Oświęcim also called Our Lady from behind the Wires. It was made in 1940 by the sculptor Bolesław Kupiec (camp inmate no. 792). It represents Our Lady standing on the globe and stepping on a wriggling snake. In 1971, the figure came to Niepokalanów from where it was handed over in 1991 to the centre established in Harmęże.

In the church there are several rooms where exhibitions are organised presenting the life and activity of St. Maksymilian. The lower part accommodates a perma-

ment exposition by a former Auschwitz camp inmate Marian Kołodziej, entitled “Memory Images. Labyrinths.”

Now the St. Maksymilian Centre in Oświęcim – Harmęże includes: ¹⁴

- The Church of Immaculate Conception (presented above);
- The Franciscan Monastery (founded in 1990);
- The retreat/pilgrimage house run by Father Kolbe Missionary Nuns of Virgin Mary.

The major ceremonies held at the Centre include:

- 8 December – novena before the ceremony of indulgence on Virgin Mary day;
- 28 May – anniversary of placing father Kolbe in the Auschwitz camp;
- 14 August – death anniversary of Maksymilian Kolbe, the day of St. Maksymilian, the patron of the Bielsko-Biała–Żywiec diocese (ceremonies in the former Auschwitz camp and in Harmęże). These ceremonies bring to Harmęże more and more groups of pilgrims. Religious tourist groups visiting the Auschwitz camp come here sometimes to see the exhibition of the works by Marian Kołodziej and the figure of Our Lady of Oświęcim. The number of visitors is still increasing, as the centre is being extended.¹⁵

1.4. The Maksymilian Kolbe Society (Maksymilian Kolbe – Werk)

The Maksymilian Kolbe Society is a charity organisation working “towards Polish – German reconciliation”. In order to overcome the historical barriers and establish friendly contacts between the Poles and the Germans (after World War II), organisations supporting this idea began to emerge. One of the organisations working directly with the former Auschwitz camp is The Maksymilian Kolbe Society.

The core of the organisation was a group of 34 Germans from Freiburg (mainly from the Catholic organisation “Pax Christi”), which came to Oświęcim in 1964 on a penance pilgrimage. In November 1964, under the motto of the “Solidarity Gift” they first organised fund-raising for former Polish inmates of Nazi camps. On 19 October 1973, the “Solidarity Gift” was transformed into the M. Kolbe Society with its seat in Freiburg.

The principal aims of the Society include: developing partnership, friendship and reconciliation between the Polish and German nations, and demonstrating to the Poles that people in Germany are not indifferent to the fate of their brothers who suffered during World War II.

The Society organises help to former inmates of Nazi prisons and concentrations camps, who live in Poland. It provides them with health care, organises recreation and supports them financially. Members of the Society participate in all religious ceremonies devoted to St. Maksymilian organised on the area of the Museum

and in the St. Maksymilian's parish in Oświęcim. Owing to the activity of this organisation too, numerous religious tourist groups of German Catholics come to Oświęcim.

It was Oświęcim that the activists of the Society selected for the venue of the ceremonies to commemorate its 20th anniversary (on 10 October 1993). These ceremonies included a visit to the death chamber of St. Maksymilian, placing flowers by the "Wall of Death", and a thanksgiving mass at St. Maksymilian's Church in Oświęcim. The ceremonies were attended *inter alia* by several hundreds of former inmates of Nazi camps and prisons, a group of several dozen Germans and almost forty priests from various parishes in Poland.¹⁶

2. The cult of St. Edith Stein – Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross¹⁷

Edith Stein was born in 1891 in Wrocław, in a Jewish family. Before she was 25, she got a PhD in philosophy under the supervision of E. Husserl. She is the author of many works on phenomenology and commentaries to the writings of St. John of the Cross. At the age of 31, she was baptised in the Roman Catholic Church, and in 1933 she joined the Carmelite convent in Cologne. She took the name of Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. In 1942, together with a group of 300 Jews baptised in the Catholic religion, she was brought to Oświęcim. On 9 August 1942, Edith Stein perished in a gas chamber in Birkenau. On 10 March 1978, the Congregation for Saints officially confirmed the compliance of her philosophical and theological writings with the teachings of the Church. On 1 May 1987, John Paul II beatified her, and in 1997 he announced her canonisation.

On 10 May 1987, a thanksgiving mass was said in Brzezinka for "Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross who carried Christ's cross" until the "death on the cross". A big cross was placed at the end of the railway ramp, and an altar the antepedium of which was veiled with fabric symbolising the striped camp clothes. Next to the altar, 20 flags were placed, of



Edith Stein

the nations whose sons and daughters perished at Auschwitz. The Primate of Poland, Cardinal Józef Glemp led the mass said jointly with 25 bishops including a representative of the West German Episcopate. The service was concluded with a solemn procession with the cross.

On 22–25 September 1988, upon the initiative of women from the West German organisation *Katholische Frauengemeinschaft (KFD)*, with the participation of Polish women, a pilgrimage following the traces of blessed Edith Stein was organised. The participants, in four groups, some on foot and some travelling by coaches, set off along the four routes of her life: the path to knowledge and faith, the path to the Carmel, the path of persecution, and the path to death. The group travelling by coaches from Wrocław to Oświęcim stopped 14 times to perform devotions by the Stations of the Way of the Cross. Each day, a solemn mass was said. The route of the pilgrimage led through Wrocław, Oleśnica, Kluczbork, Lubliniec, Sosnowiec, Jaworzno and Oświęcim to Brzezinka. On 25 September, the Way of the Cross was said in Brzezinka, attended by women from all over Poland and from Cologne.

Even though there was quite a lot of publicity about that particular pilgrimage, pilgrimages to Oświęcim, connected with Edith Stein, occur very rarely. She is usually mentioned during religious ceremonies organised on the area of the Museum and in the nearby parishes.

3. The Roma

The Roma live in more than 50 countries of the world, on all continents. In Poland, there are currently 15,000–20,000 of them. These are representatives of four tribes: Polish Roma, Bergitka, Keldrish and Lavar.¹⁸ The Roma, scattered all over the world among various cultures and religions, accept, for pragmatic reasons, the religion dominating in a given country. Hence in Poland they are mainly Catholics.¹⁹

The Catholic Church in Poland undertook pastoral activity among Gypsies in the 1970s. In 1979, the Plenary Episcopate Committee appointed the National Pastor of the Roma. This function was taken by the Jesuit father E. Wesolek. Pilgrimages became one of the forms of evangelisation among the Roma. Referring to the traditional life of “Gypsies – pilgrims”, these pilgrimages are also an opportunity for family reunions, that is why the Roma in Poland are quite willing to participate in them. Polish Gypsies make pilgrimages to:²⁰

- Częstochowa – arriving on 8 December, the day of Virgin Mary, the patron of Roma (this pilgrimage was initiated by father E. Wesolek in 1981);
- Limanowa – in mid-September where they visit the sanctuary of Our Lady of Sorrows;

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- the sanctuary at St. Ann Mountain, in the region of Opole – regional pilgrimages go there in mid-June;
 - Rywałd Królewski in the Kujawy region – in mid September the Roma of northern Poland pay homage to the Gothic figure of Our Lady of Roma.

In 1993, for the first time in Brzezinka, ceremonies of national/religious character were held to commemorate the mass killing of Roma people. They were initiated and organised by the Roma Society in Poland with its seat in Oświęcim, established in 1992. Organised every year since that time, these ceremonies have gathered the Roma from all over Europe, and are attended by the National Pastor of the Roma, currently Rev. St. Opocki.

Since the 1970s, leaders of Roma organisations from all over the world have been undertaking efforts to make the world aware of the fate of their nation during World War II and its unification around the symbols connected with the mass killing. The former Gypsy camp (Familienzigeunerlager) in Brzezinka is the largest mass grave of the Roma, their largest graveyard and symbol of their fate.²¹ In 1973, the Roma Society in Germany erected a monument at the former camp to commemorate the Roma inmates of the Birkenau camp.

The Roma Society in Poland with its President Roman Kwiatkowski, which aims to “act towards the creation of conditions for fuller participation of the Roma in the life of the society in Poland – the country which is also a homeland for the Roma...”²², has undertaken multi-faceted work to document and commemorate the mass killing of the Roma.

In April 1993, on the 50th anniversary of the deportation of Roma people to KL Auschwitz II–Birkenau, the Society together with the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau organised for the first time anniversary ceremonies to commemorate the Roma murdered at the Birkenau camp. The ceremonies were held at the former Gypsy camp in Brzezinka and at St. Maksymilian’s Church in Oświęcim. On 25 April, ceremonies in Brzezinka were held. They were attended by the Roma from all over Europe (mainly from Bohemia and Germany), representatives of the authorities of the Republic of Poland, embassies, and of the Jewish community living in Poland. Wreaths and flowers were laid by the monument – the symbolic grave of the Roma in Brzezinka. The Roma lit candles and recalled those who had survived Birkenau. Tribute was paid to the memory of the murdered with a moment of meditation and prayer. From Brzezinka, the participants went to St. Maksymilian’s Church, where Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy led a holy mass offered for the murdered Roma.

On 3 August 1994, the Society organised ceremonies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the killing of the last Roma imprisoned at KL Auschwitz II – Birkenau. Already on 2 August, numerous Roma groups came to Oświęcim (500 people from Hungary) who stayed awake and prayed for the murdered throughout

the night by candlelight. On 3 August, groups of Roma pilgrims from Poland and many European countries (including Ukraine, Bohemia, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Hungary) gathered by the monument at the former Gypsy camp in Brzezinka. The ceremonies held under the patronage of the then President of Poland Lech Wałęsa were also attended by representatives of the highest authorities of the Republic of Poland and the ambassadors of Israel and Germany.

Since that time, the Society has been organising in Brzezinka (on 2 August) ceremonies to commemorate the Roma murdered at the camp. In 1997, these ceremonies were given special importance²³ when 2nd August was declared the International Day of Remembrance of the Mass Killing of the Roma.

The arrivals of the Roma at Oświęcim as above described, are in the nature of national/religious pilgrimages. Their aim is to pay homage to their compatriots murdered there, which they do in a religious manner, and to build their own national identity.

II. Pilgrimages of Jews

During World War II, the Nazis murdered approximately 5–6 million Jews, which accounted for one third of the total Jewish population and approximately two-thirds of the Jewish inhabitants of Europe. Immediately after the war little was said about the massacre of European Jews. It was part of the Nazi crimes dealt with by the International Military Tribunal. It was only the trial of Eichmann (one of those who implemented the “Final Solution”) held in Jerusalem in 1961, which gave the proper dimension and historical perspective to the Holocaust of Jews in Europe.

In the 1960s, the term “Holocaust” became commonly used. The word holocauston comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament of the 3rd century BC and means a sacrifice to God, burnt whole, that is a sacrifice consumed by fire. The term began to be used to mean the massacre of the Jewish nation by the Nazis. In this way that event was made distinct from other historic acts of genocide.²⁴

In the initial period of the existence of the Jewish State of Israel, which was established on 14 May 1948, the subject of Holocaust was not discussed. The model to follow was then the kibbutz, the soldier, and victims, often suspected of passivity and disability, were not mentioned (Holocaust survivors suffered very much because of that).²⁵ In 1951, the Israeli Parliament announced the „Holocaust Memorial Days”, and in 1953, in Jerusalem, the Yad Vashem National Memorial Institute was established, becoming a sanctuary for the Israeli. All the Jews who perished as a result of the Nazi persecution, were posthumously granted Israeli citizenship and were referred to as “kdoshim” – “saints”. Over time, the memory of the Holocaust became in Israel an element of the national ideology.²⁶

As a result of what had happened during the World War II, many Jews lost their faith in God and man. Many of them did not know how to approach those



The March of the Living – march from Oświęcim to Brzezinka is to commemorate the “Death Route” of Jews to the crematoria (Photo by H. Matlak).

events – accept them with humbleness or revolt against God’s decrees. The question was asked: “Where was God in Auschwitz?” And thus a principal element of the Jewish theology of the 20th century was the question of God with respect to death camps. There are very differentiated views among Jewish theologians on this subject. Richard Rubenstein, for instance, believes that the only reply to death camps is to conclude that God is dead. Ignaz Maybaum claims, on the other hand, that God wanted the Holocaust and made Hitler a tool for it (like earlier God wanted the destruction of the first and the second Temple), and the Holocaust victims were not punished for their own sins but were innocent victims of the mass killing which had spread throughout the sinful world. What Jewish theologians have in common is certainly the association of the Holocaust with the rebirth of Israel.²⁷

The vast differentiation of the Jewish community, both that scattered in the world and that in Israel, the many tendencies in Judaism and the increasing Jewish secularism have caused that the Jewish world is now determined by: 1. the memory of the Holocaust, together with the symbolism of Auschwitz, 2. the support to the state of Israel.

The former Nazi camp Auschwitz II – Birkenau has become the symbol of the Jewish Holocaust also described by the Hebrew term Shoah, and the Jewish largest graveyard. Writing about Oświęcim as a Jewish graveyard, a symbol of their pain,



Groups of Jewish youth during the March of the Living (Photo by H. Matlak).

suffering and despair, we should consider the place it occupies in the awareness of the Poles. After World War II, the communist authorities in Poland began to use the symbol of Auschwitz for propaganda purposes. The nationalities of the camp victims were concealed, which complied with the Stalinist doctrine of denying the importance of ethnic features. In order to maintain the hatred of Germans (especially West Germans), Auschwitz was created as a symbol of mainly Polish suffering caused not as much by the Nazis but by the Germans.²⁸ The impact of communist propaganda is still noticeable today. A survey done in 1995 demonstrated that only 8 percent of the Poles associated Auschwitz with the Holocaust of the Jews.²⁹

Regrettably, many Jews coming to Poland are unaware that Poles too perished at Auschwitz. The lack of knowledge is one of the causes of many conflicts around Auschwitz.

Arrivals of Jews in Oświęcim commenced at the beginning of the 1970s. Due to the political situation in Poland, they began on a mass scale in the 1980s, and above all, after the breakthrough in 1989. The Jewish groups arriving in Poland usually follow the trail of the places connected with the Holocaust, “the trail of graveyards”. In most cases they are not interested in the many years of history of Jews on Polish soil.

For millions of Jews, Auschwitz is not only a symbol but a genuine graveyard. Almost every living Jewish family in Europe has relatives who perished in that



Polish group during the March of the Living (Photo by H. Matlak).

camp. In the Jewish tradition, a graveyard “*bet olam*” – the house of eternity, “*bet kvarot*” – the house of graves, also called “*bet chajim*” – the house of life, is a sacred place forever belonging to the dead resting there. It is not important what is on the surface – what matters is what the ground conceals. At the burial place tombstones are put, called in Hebrew *matsevah*. According to the tradition, relatives of the dead say the *kaddish* by the graves, light candles and lay stones. The *kaddish* is an old prayer in Aramaic. It is not a direct prayer for the peace of the dead person’s soul, but a hymn to the Kingdom of God, since the religious Jew remembers that everything – also life and death – is in God’s hands.³⁰ Ceremonies held on Jewish graveyards also take place at Auschwitz II -Birkenau.³¹

The Jewish groups coming to the Museum visit the area of the Museum in great detail, both in Oświęcim and in Brzezinka. In the former Auschwitz I they visit above all the so-called Jewish Barrack (block no. 27) which houses an exhibition on “Jewish Martyrdom and Struggle”, the gas chamber and Crematorium I.

All Jewish groups coming to the Museum always visit the area of the former KL Auschwitz II – Birkenau. There are the ruins of gas chambers and crematoria where mainly Jews were murdered and burnt. At the ruins of one of the crematoria, at the unloading ramp in Brzezinka, and in the last room of the “Jewish Barrack”, these groups organise religious ceremonies. They light candles, usually six, which symbolise the 6 million victims of the Holocaust, sign mourning religious songs, say



Gate of the former camp in Brzezinka (Photo by H. Matlak).

the kaddish, place by the ruins of the crematorium matsevah-shaped plates with the names of the murdered and read these names aloud.

Since 1988, upon the initiative of the Israeli Ministry of Education and the “March of the Living” organisation, the March of the Living has been organised in Oświęcim on the “Holocaust Memorial Day”. The three-kilometre march from Oświęcim to Brzezinka is to commemorate the “Death Route” of Jews to the crematoria, and also to instil in the young generations the memory of the history of Shoah. The initiator and the leader of the action is a member of the Knesset, Avraham Hirshon. The March is attended above all by Jewish youth from all over the world, and by Holocaust survivors. It is preceded by a year’s long educational programme organised for Jews all over the world.³²

The first March of the Living in 1988 gathered a group of more than a thousand of young Jews. Initially, the Marches were organised every two years, and beginning

from 1996, they are held every year. Until 1998, approximately 30,000 young Jews participated in them.

The sequence of the ceremonies connected with the March is always the same. On the area of the former KL Auschwitz, day one of the ceremonies starts with a moment of meditation by Crematorium I, where Jews light candles and say prayers. After the playing of a mourning tune and the signal sounded on a ram horn, the shofar, the sound of which is a call for divine grace, a march sets off. The groups participating in the ceremonies are guided by Holocaust survivors. During the three-kilometre march, the names of Jews – Holocaust victims are read aloud.

After reaching Brzezinka, Jews say the kaddish together. The state officials participating in the March give formal speeches, and then young Jews walk all over the area of the former camp. They light candles on the railway line by the ramp, at the ruins of the crematoria (usually 6 symbolic candles) and place in the soil plates symbolising matsevahs.

Apart from Jewish youth from all over the world (in 1996, Jewish youth from 38 countries participated in the March) and Holocaust survivors, these ceremonies



On the railway to Brzezinka – candle and matzevah-shaped plates with the names of the murdered (Photo by H. Matlak).

are also attended by Israeli politicians and representatives of the Polish authorities and Polish youth (for the first time in 1996). The March organised in 1998, on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel, was attended by *inter alia* the Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek and the Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu.³³ In addition to Oświęcim and Brzezinka, the participants in the March also visit other towns and cities connected with the Holocaust.

In recent years, in addition to the March of the Living, Jews started to organise at the Museum other anniversary ceremonies to commemorate the Holocaust victims. In 1993, in connection with the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, many groups of Jews from all over the world came to Poland. After the anniversary ceremonies in Warsaw, the then Israeli Prime Minister Ichhak Rabin who participated in them, came to Oświęcim together with a group of several hundred Jews. In the former Auschwitz I camp he visited *inter alia* the “Death Block”, the “Jewish Barrack”, the gas chamber and Crematorium I, and laid flowers by the “Wall of Death”. He then went to the former Auschwitz II–Birkenau camp. There, the rabbi accompanying him, together with the participants in the ceremonies, said the kaddish.

On 26 January 1995, the day before the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz camp, Jewish religious ceremonies were held on the area of the

former camp in Brzezinka. The kaddish was said by the ruins of the crematoria, and candles were lit. The President of the Co-ordination Committee of Jewish Organisations in Poland said: "We are in the world's largest Jewish graveyard, so please keep completely silent. We are beginning a religious ceremony without listing the names of the distinguished guests." Those ceremonies were attended *inter alia* by a group of several hundred pilgrims from Israel, USA, Russia and all over Europe.³⁴

On the following day, the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the camp was commemorated. During the ceremonies the following prayed for the murdered: the Chief Rabbi of Poland Pinchas Menachem Joskowicz (he said the kaddish), Bishop Tadeusz Rakoczy (praying for the murdered, the liberators, the survivors and the murderers, he referred to St. Maksymilian Kolbe and St. E. Stein), Father Sergiusz Dziewiatowski – representing the Orthodox Church. A prayer on behalf of the Evangelical/Augsburg Church was said by Bishop Rudolf Pastucha, and the last to pray were the Moslems: Imam Mahmud, Taha Żuk and Ahmud Berger.³⁵

Religious ceremonies organised by Jews will certainly be held increasingly frequently on the area of the former KL Auschwitz camp. Their religious tourist arrivals at Oświęcim are usually in the nature of pilgrimages with a national bent. There are different opinions about these arrivals and about the meaning given to the Holocaust by Jews. Their religious and secular dimensions are emphasised. In religious terms, they are described as "a new religious movement", and in the secular dimension, as "a ritual confirming who Jews are".

III. The ecumenical pilgrimage

The ecumenical pilgrimage for "peace and life" arrived for the first time at Oświęcim on 8 December 1994. More than 100 people from all over the world – Christians, Jews, Indians, Mormons, Buddhist monks – participated in the International Peace March organised by the Buddhist religious community Nipponzan Myohoji. The route of the 243-day March led from Oświęcim through *inter alia* Bohemia, Austria, Serbia, Bosnia, Israel, Iraq, Pakistan, Cambodia, Vietnam, to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The participants in the March, staying in Oświęcim for a few days, organised joint prayers and meditations on the area of the former camp. During the first stage, between Oświęcim and Pszczyzna, disabled people from Holland and a group of 70 veterans of the war from Norway were among those who joined the march.

The aims of this pilgrimage are defined as follows: offering prayers for the victims of all wars, pondering over and considering deeply the causes of the military expansion and the tragedy of World War II, supporting civil organisations in their voluntary work for peace in the world, learning lessons from history, and promising to act only without violence through self-discipline and (self) purification. One of the conditions for participation was to take part in the daily ecumenical prayers. The

ecumenical pilgrimage was a form of a response “... to all those sufferings, misfortunes and poverty caused on the earth by wars ...”³⁶

The ecumenical pilgrimages initiated by the International Peace March have been coming (every year since then) to Oświęcim to the International Oświęcim Meditations. The organiser of this ceremony is mainly the Buddhist community of New York. A group averaging 100 to 150 people, including pilgrims from America, Germany, Poland, France, Switzerland, Belgium and Italy, of the Jewish, Buddhist, Christian and Islamic traditions, come to Oświęcim for 5 days to participate in prayers and meditations on the area of the former camp. Some of those people combine Buddhist practices with the acceptance of other religions – Judaism, Christianity or Islam.

Their five-day stay in Oświęcim includes:³⁷

- visiting the area of the former camp;
- daily joint meditations in the morning, in the hall of the Museum;
- daily services for followers of different religions;
- daily meditations and prayers at the unloading ramp of the former camp in Brzezinka;
- ceremonies in the ruins of the crematoria and by the International Memorial to the Victims of Fascism;
- a multi-religious service by the „Wall of Death” by block no. 11. The services are said by the clergy participating in these events, usually priests, a rabbi and an imam.

The multi-religious service by the “Wall of Death” combines liturgical elements of various religions, *inter alia* lighting candles, Buddhist bowing, the sign of the cross, the saying of the kaddish, the tune on the shofar, or the marking of the heads of the participants in the service with ash.

During the meditations at the ramp in Brzezinka (three sessions half an hour each), the names of the victims of the Auschwitz camp are read aloud, and the beginning and end of the meditation is marked by the blowing of the shofar.

People coming on the ecumenical pilgrimage are oriented at spiritual development and they arrive at Oświęcim above all for religious motives.

IV. Analysis of the tourist arrivals at the museum

Tourist arrivals at the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau are registered by the Museum’s Educational Department. The data available from the Museum give the numbers of people who register their arrival by, for instance, requesting the services of a guide. Persons who do not register are not included in the statistics. Between 1946 and the end of 1998, the Museum was visited by 24,305,931 people of whom 6,062,931 were foreigners.

Until the end of the 1950s, the Museum was visited every year by 100,000-200,000 people. Among the visitors the dominating group were former inmates of KL Auschwitz, their families and friends. Visitors from abroad constituted between 3 to 11 percent of the total number of arrivals. A decisive majority among them were representatives of the “brother” socialist countries.

Since the beginning of the 1960s, there has been an increase in the number of visitors – on average between 300,000 and 500,000 annually. The number of visitors was the highest in 1967– 640,997, which was connected with the unveiling of the International Memorial to the Victims of Fascism in Brzezinka.

In the 1970s, the number of visitors to the Museum was about 700,000 a year. The highest number was noted in 1972 – 807,813, when the first anniversary of the beatification of father Maksymilian was commemorated, and in 1979 – 739,775 people, when John Paul II visited Oświęcim during his first pilgrimage to Poland. With the election of the Pole – Karol Wojtyła as the Pope (in 1978) the interest in Poland grew. Foreigners accounted for 20 to 30 percent of the total number of visitors at that time.

Martial law was introduced in Poland on 13 December 1981, which closed the borders of the country to foreign tourists, and markedly affected the number of tourists visiting the Museum. The most serious decrease, however, was noted in 1982, when foreign guests accounted for as little as 4.3 percent of the visitors.

Major changes took place in the breakthrough year of 1989. The collapse of the communist system in Europe resulted in an almost complete disappearance of tourists from the eastern block countries (it was the last year of subsidised school and company excursions organised in the socialist countries) and an increase in the number of visitors from the West.

Between 1989 and 1998, the annual number of visitors to the former KL Auschwitz totalled 500,000. Foreign tourists at that time constituted 42-48 percent of the total number of visitors. The largest numbers of foreigners are now coming from the USA, Germany, UK, France, Italy, Israel, Norway, Holland and Denmark.

An increase in the number of tourists from Israel was noted at the Museum beginning from 1990 when the diplomatic relations between Warsaw and Tel Aviv were restored. For comparison, in the years 1959-1990, the Museum in Oświęcim was visited by 23,496 people from Israel, while in 1996 only, there were 20,214 visitors. This increase is also due to the “March of the Living” organised since 1988.

Since 1968, the Museum has also been recording the numbers of visitors to Brzezinka. Between 200,000 and 300,000 come every year. By 1990, on average 40 percent of visitors to the area of the Museum also came to see Brzezinka. In 1991-1998, an increase in the number of tourists was noted. They accounted on average for more than 50 percent of visitors to the Oświęcim part of the Museum. The growing interest in the Brzezinka area of the Museum in the 1990s can be

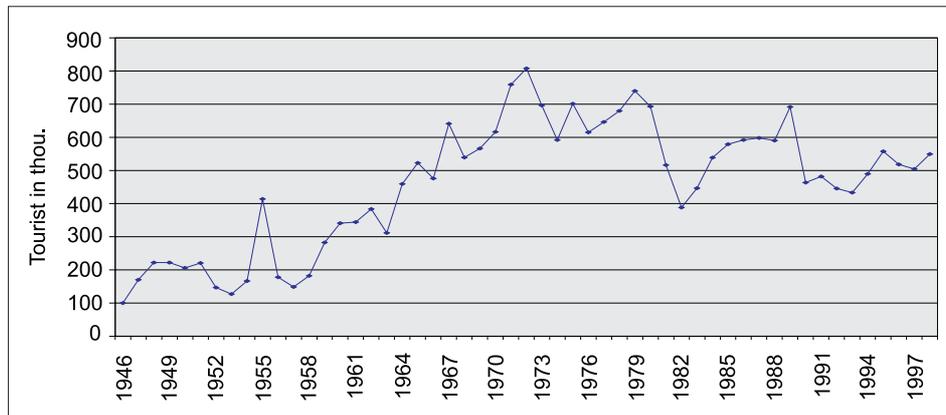


Fig. 1.

Tourist arrivals at the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1946-1998.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the data from the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

associated with the increasing awareness of the role of KL Auschwitz II – Birkenau in the mass killing action.

A considerable percentage of those who come to the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau are young people. In the years 1960-1998 (no data available for the previous years) 7,094,958 arrived, of whom only 11.3 percent were young people from abroad.

The statistics of the numbers of young visitors, kept since 1960, indicate that the percentage of young people is on the increase. In 1960-1965, they averaged 15 percent of the total number of visitors, in the 1970s – between 25 and 30 percent, in the 1980s – 30-40 percent, and in the 1990s – approx. 50 percent.

Young people from Poland form a decisive majority of the young visitors arriving at the Museum (in 1960-1998, as much as 88.7 percent of the total).

Between 1960 and 1989, young people from abroad accounted on average for 5.2 percent of the total number of young visitors to the Museum. A decisive increase in the number of young visitors has been noted at the Museum since 1991. Over the past eight years they accounted for 25.7 percent of the total number of young people.

Seasonal variations in the tourist movement

Tourist arrivals at the Museum culminate between April and November. More than 90 percent of the tourists came at that time, while the number of tourists is the smallest in December, January and February.

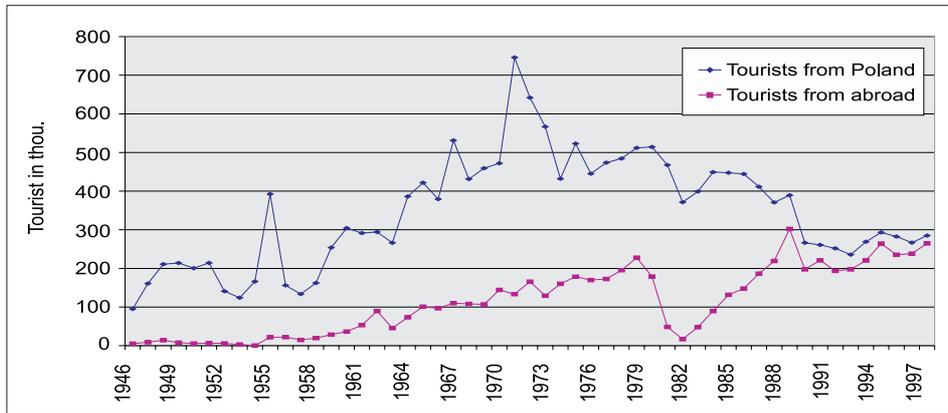


Fig. 2.
Tourists from Poland and abroad, visiting the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1946-1998.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the data from the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

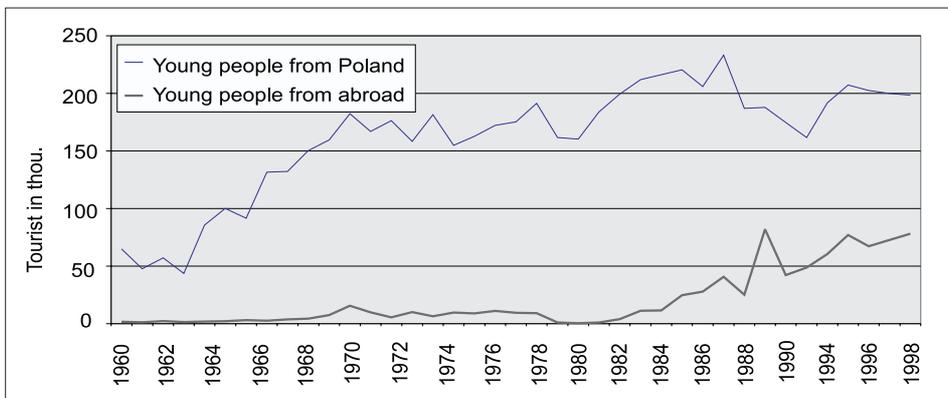


Fig. 3.
Young people from Poland and abroad visiting the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1960-1998.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the data from the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

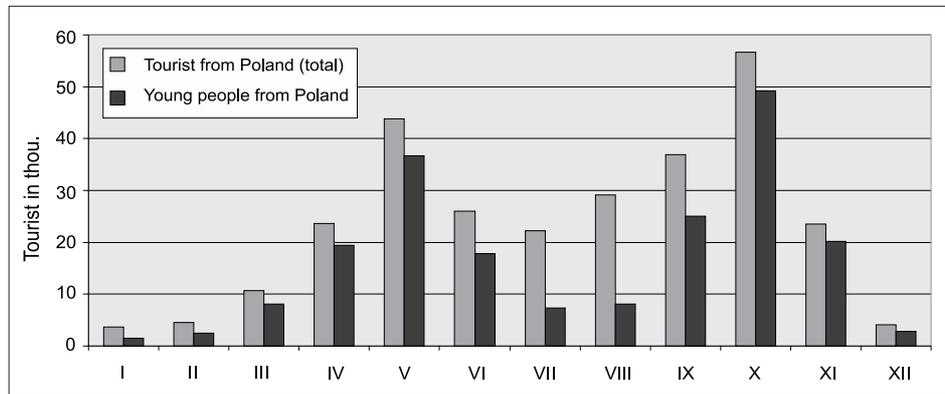


Fig. 4.
Seasonal variation of the tourist arrivals at the Museum – tourists from Poland in 1998.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the data from the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

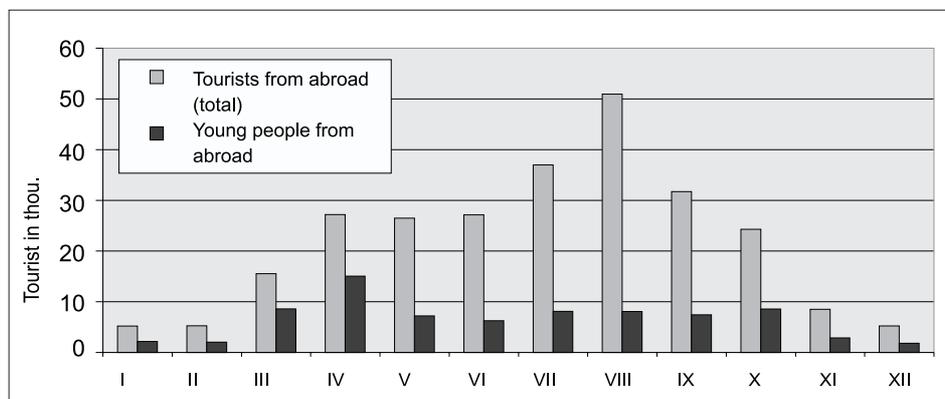


Fig. 5.
Seasonal variation of the tourist arrivals at the Museum – foreign tourists in 1998.

Source: Prepared by the author based on the data from the State Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The arrival of tourists from Poland are largely connected with the numerous anniversaries and ceremonies at the Museum. These include:

- the anniversaries of the first transport of Poles to the camp (June);
- the manifestations on All Saints' Day;
- the manifestations on the anniversary of the outbreak of World War II;
- the masses organised on the occasion of the anniversaries of the canonisation and the martyr's death of father M. Kolbe.

Since a decided majority of Polish youth come to the Museum on school excursions, the largest number of these excursions occur in the months of April to June and September to November, whereas a considerable decrease is noted in the summer holiday months of July and August.

Foreign tourists arrive in the highest numbers in the summer months of July and August (more than 30 percent). Since 1988, the March of the Living has been organised in April and thus the number of foreign tourists, particularly young people, is high.

Notes:

¹ F. Piper, *Ilu ludzi zginęło w Auschwitz* [How many people perished at Auschwitz], Oświęcim 1992.

² A. Jackowski, *Pielgrzymki = turystyka pielgrzymkowa = turystyka religijna? Rozważania terminologiczne*. [Pilgrimages = pilgrimage tourism = religious tourism? Terminological considerations], "Turyzm" 1998, vol. 8, book 1, p.10.

³ Ibid., p. 15-17.

⁴ A. Jackowski, *Zarys geografii pielgrzymek* [An outline of the geography of pilgrimages], Cracow 1991, p. 33-45.

⁵ *Kodeks Prawa Kanonicznego* [Canon law code] of 25 January 1983, book IV, part 3 *Miejsca i czasy święte* [Sacred places and times], Kan. 1230 – 1234.

⁶ For the first time the beatification was announced by the Pope. Before, it had been announced by bishops or cardinals.

⁷ Father Maksymilian was the first to be elevated to sainthood by John Paul II.

⁸ Information obtained in an interview of staff of the Visitors' Service Section of the Museum.

⁹ A. Jackowski, *Pielgrzymki i turystyka religijna w Polsce* [Pilgrimages and religious tourism in Poland], Warsaw 1991, p. 74 – 84.

¹⁰ Information obtained in the author's interview of staff of Visitors' Service Section of the Museum.

¹¹ The chapter prepared on the basis of press cuts kept in the Museum library, in the file "Maksymilian Kolbe", and above all, the author's interview of the first parish priest of St. Maksymilian's Church, Bishop Kazimierz Górny.

¹² Information from a leaflet produced by The St Maksymilian Kolbe Centre in Harmęże, received from one of the Franciscans in Harmęże.

¹³ F. Szęch, *Franciszkański Ośrodek św. Maksymiliana Kolbego w Harmężach* [The St. Maksymilian Franciscan Centre in Harmęże], "Biuletyn Towarzystwa Opieki nad Oświęcimem" 1997, no. 31, p. 53.

¹⁴ Information from the leaflet of The St Maksymilian Kolbe Centre in Harmęże. Address of the Centre: oo. Franciszkanie, ul. Franciszkańska 12, 32 – 600 Oświęcim – Harmęże, tel. (033) 430711

¹⁵ On 18 July 1998, Harmęże hosted a group of 150 pilgrims from Poland – information from the Centre. So far the Centre is not keeping any statistics of the visitors.

¹⁶ W. Pająk, *Maksymilian Kolbe – Werk – 20 lat w służbie pojednania. Relacja z uroczystości w Oświęcimiu i we Freiburgu* [Maksymilian Kolbe – Werk – 20 years of work towards reconciliation. An account of the ceremonies in Oświęcim and in Freiburg], "Biuletyn Towarzystwa opieki nad Oświęcimem" 1994, no. 20.

¹⁷ The chapter prepared on the basis of press cuts kept in the Museum library, in the file "Edyta Stein".

¹⁸ M. Jagiełło, *Partnerstwo dla przyszłości* [Partnership for the future], Warsaw 1995, p. 281 – 282.

¹⁹ In Western Europe, the Roma are Protestants or Catholics, in the Balkans they profess Islam or Orthodox Christianity. A. Bartosz, *Nie bój się Cygana* [Do not fear the Gypsies], Sejny 1994, p. 93 – 94.

²⁰ European Gypsies make pilgrimages *inter alia* to Lourdes (the first Gypsy pilgrimage came in 1957), Romainville in France (there is the figure of Our Lady of the Gypsies there), Altenburg near Cologne, Saragossa, Saintes–Maries–de–la–Mer (southern France, where there is the figure of the patron of Gypsies called Nostra Dama de la Mar), Częstochowa (to the Black Madonna), Letnica in the Balkans (there Catholic, Orthodox and Moslem Gypsies met), *Ibid.* p. 99 – 105.

²¹ S. Kaprański, *Oświęcim: miejsce wielu pamięci* [Oświęcim: a memorial place of many], „Pro Memoria” 1998, no. 8, p. 19 – 21.

²² Statute of the Roma Society in Poland – the part on the aims of the organisation, made available to the author by the President of the Society Roman Kwiatkowski.

²³ M. G. Gerlich, *Rom będzie pamiętał ...* [The Roma will remember], „Pro Memoria” 1999, no. 10, p. 49.

²⁴ M. R. Marrus, *Holocaust*, Warsaw 1993, p. 13 – 43. The term “genocide” was first used by the lawyer Raphael Lemkin in 1943, when he found out about the murdering of European Jews by the Nazis.

- ²⁵ S. Wilkanowicz, *Symbole religijne w Oświęcimiu* [Religious symbols in Oświęcim], „Pro Memoria” 1997, no. 7, p. 28.
- ²⁶ N. de Lange *Świat żydowski* [The Jewish world], Warsaw 1996, p. 130.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 127 – 130.
- ²⁸ T. Globan – Klaus, *Pamięć podzielona, pamięć urażona: Oświęcim i Auschwitz w polskiej i żydowskiej pamięci zbiorowej* [The divided memory, the hurt memory: Oświęcim and Auschwitz in the Polish and the Jewish collective memory], [in:] Z Macha, “Europa po Auschwitz”, Cracow 1995, p. 77 – 88.
- ²⁹ K. Buchmann, *Spory o Auschwitz* [Disputes on Auschwitz], “Tygodnik Powszechny”, 24 March 1996, no. 12, p. 8.
- ³⁰ N. Kameraz-Kos. *Święta i obyczaje żydowskie* [Jewish feasts and customs], Warsaw 1997, p. 119-125.
- ³¹ In the Jewish tradition there is no cult of the dead. However, together with the development of Hasidism and the kabbalah, the habit originated of making pilgrimages to tsaddiks - Hasid leaders. They are considered as intermediaries between God and people. That is why requests to God on pieces of paper are put on their graves. A. Unterman, *Encyklopedia tradycji i legend żydowskich*, Warsaw 1994, pp. 213 – 214.
- ³² *Kronika wydarzeń* [A chronicle of events], “Pro Memoria” 1997, no. 7, p. 154; „Pro Memoria” 1998, no. 9, p. 137.
- ³³ The text prepared on the basis of press cuts kept in the Museum library, in the file „Żydzi” [Jews].
- ³⁴ B. Kozakowski, *Uroczystości 50 – lecia wyzwolenia obozu zagłady KL Auschwitz* [Ceremonies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the liberation of the KL Auschwitz death camp], Biuletyn Towarzystwa Opieki nad Oświęcimiem 1995, no. 24, p. 22 – 23.
- ³⁵ Ibid, p.16.
- ³⁶ Information about the ecumenical pilgrimage of 1994/1995 comes from the text left by its participants at the Museum, entitled „Ekumeniczna pielgrzymka o pokój i życie 1995 (dla uczczenia 50 rocznicy zakończenia II wojny światowej)” [Ecumenical pilgrimage for peace and life 1995 (to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II)].
- ³⁷ S. Krajewski, *To miejsce ma niebywałą siłę przyciągania ...* [There is an exceptional attracting force in this place], „Pro Memoria” 1998, no. 8, p. 37 – 38. Information obtained in the author’s interview of staff of the Visitors’ Service Section of the Museum.