

## The Future of Holocaust Memorialisation: Confronting Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Homophobia Through Memory Work

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Preprint / Preprint

Sammelwerk / collection

### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Pető, A., & Thorson, H. (Eds.). (2015). *The Future of Holocaust Memorialisation: Confronting Racism, Anti-Semitism, and Homophobia Through Memory Work*. Budapest: Bonex Press KFT. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-72016-4>

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# THE FUTURE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIALIZATION

Confronting Racism, Antisemitism,  
and Homophobia through Memory Work

First published 2015  
by Tom Lantos Institute  
1016 Budapest, Bérc utca 13-15.

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ISBN: 978-615-80159-0-5

Printed by Bonex Press KFT

Copy edited by Helga Thorson and Andrea van Noord.

**THE FUTURE OF  
HOLOCAUST  
MEMORIALIZATION:**

*Confronting Racism,  
Antisemitism, and Homophobia  
through Memory Work*

**EDITED BY  
ANDREA PETŐ AND HELGA THORSON**

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# INTRODUCTION

## **ANNA-MÁRIA BÍRÓ**

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In June 2014 the Central European University and the Tom Lantos Institute organized an international conference on “The Future of Holocaust Memorialization: Confronting Racism, Antisemitism, and Homophobia through Memory Work” in Budapest, Hungary. Prominent educators, researchers, and practitioners gathered to consider the potential of Holocaust memorialization and memory work in countering antisemitism and other forms of discrimination as well as the strengthening of democratic values and processes. Participants explored various teaching methodologies and methods in higher education and assessed a number of innovative civic initiatives. This book gathers the contributions of conference speakers to instigate further discussion on this important issue when antisemitism has been on the rise in Europe and beyond.

For a Budapest-based human and minority rights institution focusing, among other things, on Jewish life and antisemitism, this initiative is of crucial importance at a time when the Hungarian state and society struggle to come to terms with their roles in the Hungarian Holocaust and the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews and Roma. On the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary it has become clear that there are divergent, if not antagonistic, memories and narratives which are often highly politicized. It is exactly these events that focus on existing practices of effective Holocaust education and memory work that model and inspire possible ways forward in a society confronting its past.

The Tom Lantos Institute hopes that this publication contributes to understanding and accepting our responsibility in these past tragic events as the first steps in a process of reconciliation and social justice.

# INTRODUCTION

## JOHN SHATTUCK

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and International Relations  
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Budapest, Hungary

This volume consists of papers from the conference on “The Future of Holocaust Memorialization: Confronting Racism, Antisemitism, and Homophobia through Memory Work”, hosted by Central European University (CEU) in June 2014. The logo of the conference featured the photograph of August Landmesser, an ordinary worker in Nazi Germany, who alone refused to give the Nazi salute while standing in a large public crowd. Landmesser’s striking photographic image is a dramatic illustration of how individuals can resist oppression.

2014 marks the seventieth anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary. CEU has organized several commemorative events, including the conference on which this volume is based.

An example of how CEU is a pioneer in the teaching of Holocaust studies in a global context is its hosting of the Shoah Foundation’s Visual History Archive of Holocaust survivors. Another example is CEU’s training of Hungarian and Polish secondary school teachers and faculty from other universities in teaching about the Holocaust. The CEU Center for Teaching and Learning focuses on digital initiatives as a new way of teaching traumatic histories, and it has pioneered a course with Smith College in Massachusetts, US, on the topic of gendering the Holocaust.

The aim of the Holocaust education conference was to show how critical pedagogy can teach students how to follow August Landmesser’s example and honor his legacy of resistance. During the conference participants shared their teaching, research, and memorialization practices with one an-

other and focused on how Holocaust education can be used to confront issues of racism, antisemitism, homophobia, and other forms of exclusion. I am pleased that this volume can be used as a starting point for future discussions of Holocaust education.



# INTRODUCTON: THE FUTURE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIALIZATION

## ANDREA PETŐ

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On June 10, 2014, a group of eminent international scholars, archivists and museum directors, and professors committed to educating about the Holocaust through innovative teaching projects, as well as individuals who have undertaken bold and creative commemorative projects, met to discuss the future of Holocaust education. The conference took place at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

The conference title, “The Future of Holocaust Memorialization: Confronting Racism, Antisemitism,<sup>1</sup> and Homophobia through Memory Work”, is the name of a working group and research collective that came into existence a year and a half before the conference took place. Through a series of coincidences and chance encounters, the initial members of this working group found themselves working together on collaborative projects or sought each other out at conferences and other venues due to common interests. The original eight members from five different countries decided it would be helpful to think critically across borders about the future of Holocaust remembrance

<sup>1</sup> The term antisemitism is increasingly spelled as one word (without a hyphen and all lower case). The new spelling is meant to clarify that the word specifically means the hatred and discrimination of Jews, since the traditional spelling (anti-Semitism) could also connote opposition to people who speak a Semitic language, which also includes Arabs. You will see the word spelled both ways throughout this book. The meaning that is implied, however, is the same, i.e., the hatred and discrimination of Jewish people.

and education, and to do so in an interdisciplinary way.

Andrea Pető agreed to host the first working group meeting in the form of a conference at Central European University. The working group members asked Andrea Pető to help organize the conference for several reasons. First, they knew that she is not daunted by large tasks such as conference planning and that she knows how to get things done, and get things done well. Secondly, they wanted to meet in a centrally located city in Europe, and Central European University seemed to be just the place. Thirdly, and most importantly, they thought it would be significant to hold the conference in Hungary – not only as a way to commemorate the seventy-year anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary, but also because Budapest is currently in the midst of intense debates about how best to commemorate and memorialize the Holocaust through monuments, museums, and educational endeavors.

Our respective institutions, Central European University and the University of Victoria, organized the conference in collaboration with the Tom Lantos Institute. We received generous conference support from the Tom Lantos Institute, the European Union Centre of Excellence at the University of Victoria, the Embassies of the United States, Israel, Norway, and Sweden, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The conference provided a stimulating forum to think about the present through the lens of the past and to remember the many millions of people who were annihilated seventy plus years ago. We hope that through our attempts to *commemorate* we would think critically about ways to *educate* and work to make the world a better place in the present, while helping secure a future beyond hatred, violence, and geno-

cide. Publishing the conference proceedings is one way to keep this dialogue alive.

This book consists of fifteen contributions and is divided into two parts. The first part addresses how the Holocaust is presented and discussed in museums and academic institutions; the second part highlights innovative teaching practices and Holocaust memorial projects. The first two contributions concentrate on the challenges of remembering, commemorating, and educating about the Holocaust from the perspective of the work being done at two different institutions in the United States: the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) and the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation. Paul Shapiro discusses the importance of accurately representing historical facts and challenging the myths that have emerged in various locations over time. Karen Jungblut focuses on the future directions of Holocaust education – specifically, how the work of institutions such as the USC Shoah Foundation today may influence the way in which we teach the Holocaust in the future.

The next three contributions focus on Holocaust discourses today. Using Denmark as a case study, Cecilie Felicia Stokholm Banke examines the intricate relationships between local history and the wider legacy of the Holocaust. Klas-Göran Karlsson outlines the relationship between genetic and genealogical conceptions of history, where the genetic corresponds to “we are history” and the genealogical to “we make history”, and calls for a three-pronged approach that includes a structural perspective as well. John Swanson investigates the relationship between particular and universal notions of the Holocaust and argues that students need to understand the Holocaust historically and chronologically as well as realize that Holocaust discourses change over time.

The second part of the book outlines new and potential pedagogical directions in Holocaust Studies and describes commemorative projects that manifest themselves in various mediums, such as memorials, film, or art. The first section of the second part focuses on the challenges and benefits of working

with digital resources. Helga Dorner, Edit Jeges, and Andrea Pető discuss an innovative collaborative teaching project between Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, and Smith College in Massachusetts, US, in which students have to edit their own digital multimedia narrative about Holocaust representation. In her contribution to this publication, Elizabeth Anthony describes the value of using the digital collection of the International Tracing Service and outlines how digitization has transformed research on the Holocaust, particularly by providing access to archival material previously unavailable as well as by providing more robust search functions.

The next section of the book looks at various initiatives that open up dialogues against hate – whether in post-secondary education, organizations that address the problems of racism, antisemitism and other forms of hate today, or art exhibits that invite the viewer to confront and re-evaluate societal stereotypes and prejudices. Ildikó Barna describes a course for students of Military Sciences, Public Administration, and Law on “The Background and Social Consequences of Hate Crimes” in Budapest, Hungary. Heike Radvan discusses the work of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation in Berlin, Germany, in addressing current antisemitism and recognizing the different ways the Holocaust was commemorated in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. In her analysis of the visual artist Anna Adam, Charlotte Schallié analyzes satire as a device that can provoke discussion and confront societal prejudice.

Pedagogical practices that challenge the ways we typically teach the Holocaust are the focus of the following section. Anamaria Orla-Bukowska encourages educators to remember the Righteous Among the Nations in their teaching. While most students can easily name the perpetrators, very few are familiar with the names of those individuals who risked their own lives in order to save or comfort another human being. In their contribution to this publication, Helga Thorson and Andrea van Noord discuss the

learning outcomes of a course that takes students out of the classroom and directly to Holocaust memorial sites, museums, and monuments. They suggest that through processes of introspection, intergenerational communication, and intercultural interaction students become personally invested in the Holocaust memorialization process.

Finally, the book highlights three local initiatives in teaching, researching, and memorializing the Holocaust. Barbara Kintaert traces the history of the research group *Servitengasse 1938* and explains how the curiosity of one person asking the simple question of “Who was living in my apartment in 1938?” led to a memorial project commemorating the Jewish residents of one street, *Servitengasse*, in Vienna, Austria. Borbála Klacsmann describes the 2014 Hungarian Memory Walk workshop in Budapest, Hungary, in which participants analyze memorials and produce short films about a memorial site in their community. The book ends with a short reflection by the documentary filmmaker and Holocaust survivor, Gabor Kalman, describing the film he made about a high school teacher in Kalocsa, Hungary and her research on the once thriving Jewish community there. All of these local initiatives reveal the important local-global dynamic that is a part of Holocaust Studies.

So where do we go from here? The second working group conference is set to take place at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada from September 2-4, 2015. The conference title, “Global Connections: Critical Holocaust Education in a Time of Transition”, highlights the international and transnational connections and collaborations that are inherent in the formation of the working group. Further, the conference will examine global connections in Holocaust education in two distinct ways: by highlighting the personal and professional relationships forged across the globe when researching and memorializing the Holocaust and by examining the relationship between Holocaust education and other contemporary and historical issues and events. As the Holocaust becomes increasingly dis-

tant history with fewer survivors around to tell their stories and share their living memory, conference participants delve into critical questions about the relevance and impact of Holocaust education in today’s world.

As we seek to understand ways in which the Holocaust is part of a larger context of systemized prejudice and injustice, Victoria’s own history offers an interesting perspective and setting. By acknowledging situational and historical local events – such as the internment of Japanese-Canadians in WWII or the residential school system in Canada – conference participants will discuss not only what makes events such as the Holocaust or First Nations’ history unique but will also investigate the reciprocal nature of Holocaust and human rights education. How can decades of research on the Holocaust be used to help understand and educate about other human rights issues and, in turn, how can local histories shed light on the way the Holocaust is represented and taught. In what ways can *local* memory cultures interact on a *global scale*?

Following the discussions in Budapest, The “Global Connections” conference has three main goals: (1) to re-think Holocaust education in a time of transition, (2) to promote international cooperation, interdisciplinary research, and teaching collaborations in the field of Holocaust Studies, and (3) to build an understanding of how events of the past, such as the Holocaust, can inform and address issues such as ethnic, racial, or religious hatred, violence, and genocide as they occur in the present.

We envision these conference proceedings as a way to begin the working group’s discussions on the extent to which Holocaust education can or should be used as a way to tackle contemporary issues of hatred, racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, homophobia, xenophobia, ethnic conflict, and genocide. What is the future of Holocaust education? How can it help us remember the past, change the present, and make the future world a better place

## **PART 1**

# **1.1 INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES**

# FACING THE FACTS OF THE HOLOCAUST: THE CHALLENGES AND THE COST OF FAILURE

## **PAUL A. SHAPIRO**

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The truth matters, even when it is painful, politically inconvenient, contrary to what one might have hoped, or in conflict with a narrative one would like to believe and would like to convince others to believe. Facing the facts of the Holocaust and seeking to learn essential lessons from the murderous years that bloodied all of Europe in the mid-twentieth century can provide us with the ability to move forward as individuals, communities, countries, nations, continents, and across the globe. Denying, falsifying, avoiding, or distorting the facts of what happened creates an impediment to progress that is virtually impossible to overcome. Each of us knows this from our own life experiences.

When the facts are difficult to bear, as is the case when we contemplate the Holocaust, the challenge to look the truth squarely in the face can be extremely difficult. Intellectual honesty, ethical courage, even physical stamina are required to pursue serious study and teaching about the murder of six million European Jews – of whom some 600,000 were Hungarian Jews – and the mass murder of other groups targeted by Nazi Germany and the Axis allies. But only this will secure a long-term basis for memorial work that has its foundation in the historical truth, preserves the dignity of those who perished and of those who survived, and enables our generation and those that follow to learn from the Holocaust, an event that has been broadly recognized as the defin-

ing tragedy of the twentieth century. Yes, the truth matters.

This simple statement is one of the reminders enshrined on the walls of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I have been asked to share some information about our museum, the goals and purposes for which it was created, and some of the challenges involved in pursuing those goals. I would also like to discuss some of the potential risks of failing to preserve the history of the Holocaust, failing to educate broad segments of the population regarding that history and its contemporary relevance, or deciding to diminish focus on, relativize, trivialize, distort, or simply submerge the specific, documented factuality of the Holocaust in the public mind. Taking that dangerous path risks failing to understand the full range of human potentials, from the best to the very worst imaginable; poses risks to understanding the long legacy that genocidal or other mass crimes leave in their wake; presents significant challenges to the functioning of free and open civil societies; and ultimately can lead to an evolution away from democratic and toward more controlled or authoritarian political systems – like those that provided the milieu in which the Holocaust itself could occur three quarters of a century ago.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was created by a near-unanimous act of Congress as a Federal institution of the United States Government. Since it opened twenty-one years ago, nearly forty million people have visited the Museum, and we experience over fifteen million visits annually to the Museum's website, from every country of the world with the exception of North Korea. Over ninety percent of visitors to the Museum in Washington are not Jewish, and

student groups, people under twenty-one years of age, constitute a large percentage of visitors.

What factors led the United States Congress to create the Museum?

a) First, a belief that it is important for Americans to understand monumental historical events that continue to shape the world in which we live today. One need only read the newspapers or consider the vehement debates regarding Holocaust history that are taking place in Hungary where we have gathered for this important conference, if you need to be convinced that this is the case.

b) Second, a recognition that no other historical event that is so clearly documented reveals as dramatically as the Holocaust all of the potentials of all human beings. In a specific set of circumstances, every person can become a perpetrator, a collaborator, someone complicit through greed, envy, fear, or some other motivation. Every person can also become a victim. The fact that the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington addresses, in its exhibitions and other programs, not only the persecution of the Jews, but also the fates of the other victim groups persecuted by the Nazis and their collaborators on racial or religious grounds – Sinti and Roma, Polish national leadership groups, Soviet prisoners of war (POWs), people with disabilities, Jehovah's Witnesses and other minority Christian sects, homosexuals – makes it clear to visitors that every person can find himself or herself a victim of persecution. Then there is the potential to be a so-called "bystander". "Doing nothing" when an injustice is directed at someone other than oneself is in all likelihood the most common human potential and behavior. But of course, the Holocaust demonstrates that "doing nothing" in such circumstances is not a neutral act – whether of individuals or of states – but a behavior that empowers the perpetrators. Finally, there is the most noble potential of human beings – the potential that separates us from beasts – the potential to be a rescuer, to risk one's own safety and security, for example, to save the child of

people one does not even know. Holocaust memorialization and Holocaust education can discourage some of these potentials and encourage those which can help improve the local, national, and global communities in which we live.

c) Third, as an American institution, the Museum reflects Congressional conviction, grounded in our own national history as well as in Holocaust history, that it is essential to educate people about the inevitable and long-term consequences of racial and religious prejudice, including anti-Semitism and other forms of xenophobia. While the establishment of anti-Semitism as state policy during the Holocaust – in Germany, Vichy France, Romania, Hungary, and other Axis allied or satellite states – was, of course, deadly for Jews, unleashing the disregard for human dignity that anti-Semitism represents had deadly consequences for millions of non-Jews as well.

d) Fourth, Holocaust education also reveals the speed with which it was possible for an educated society, and with it an entire continent, to abandon all of the ethical norms and values established over a 2,000 year history of "civilization". There is a warning in this history for all people who are fortunate enough to live in democratic societies. Holocaust education can provide a shield against extremism and authoritarian tendencies. Dictatorial rule in Nazi Germany was facilitated by the early imposition of limitations on free media and free expression; undermining the independence of the judiciary; reduction of the security or sanctity of one's home or workplace; and a "reform" of electoral procedures in order to favor, indeed guarantee, certain outcomes. The goals of governments that take such steps rarely include enhancement of the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

e) Fifth in this broad statement of purpose, the Congress recognized that the Holocaust, more than any other historical event, illustrates the long and difficult legacy that mass crimes, genocidal crimes, and crimes against humanity leave in their wake. If we fail to

learn to respond effectively to contemporary expressions of racial or religious hatred, to hate crimes, or to genocidal threats in our own time, it is certain that our children and their children will be struggling to deal with the consequences of our inaction today.

Of course, it is not always easy to look the truth in the face, but the consequences of failing to do so are worse. In recognition of this reality, we are hard at work already on the next major special exhibition of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which will explore the failures of our own country to respond effectively to the persecution and murder of European Jewry. An exhibition on *America and the Holocaust* will not be easy for many Americans to digest. Americans, like people in every country, would prefer to believe the myths that make dealing with the Holocaust easier – the myth that we did not know what was taking place; the myth that there was nothing we could do; and other similar ideas that would absolve our country of its historical failure to take steps that were possible and that could have saved lives.

Every country has such myths. In France it is comforting, but false, to believe that all Frenchmen were in the Resistance. In the Netherlands, it was convenient for decades to allow people to think that all Dutch families were hiding a Jewish family – an Anne Frank – in their attics, while the truth is that it was the Dutch civil service and police who identified and rounded up the Jews and turned them over to the Germans. And here in Hungary, unfortunately, the myths are being officially created as we meet: the myth that there is no connection between Regent Horthy's alliance with Adolf Hitler for the purpose of regaining territory and the deportation and murder of the Jews living in those territories; the myth that Hungary's Jews were protected and undisturbed before March 19, 1944; the myth that the Regent did not understand that the "resettlement" of Jews was simply a euphemism for their murder; the myth that the entry of German military forces unopposed into Hungary – an

Axis allied state – can be equated with the Red Army's subsequent occupation of the country; or the myth that only the Germans bore direct responsibility for the deportation of Hungarian Jewry in mid-1944. Other myths include the myth that Regent Horthy no longer wielded significant authority in a state that had "lost its sovereignty"; the myth that even if one admits that some Hungarian state authorities participated in the perpetration of the Holocaust, average citizens were opposed and remained immune to the betrayal of their neighbors, looting of abandoned apartments, and other forms of complicity (or even rejoicing) that characterized the Holocaust elsewhere in Europe; or the myth that it is acceptable to equate the murder of hundreds of thousands of civilian women, children, and old people, most living without the protection of able-bodied men in their families who had been drafted into the infamous Jewish Labor Service, with the loss of armed military forces on the Eastern Front. Without any doubt, the loss of life was tragic in both cases, but they were not equivalent to one another. Nor were Nazism and fascism, on the one hand, and communism, on the other. In the face of the unquestionably authentic and powerful historical documentation that has survived relating to the Holocaust in Hungary, these new myths constitute a significant challenge to the future of Holocaust memorialization. To the extent that these myths are embraced or promoted by individuals and organizations that represent or hold governmental position, the challenge becomes even greater.

In conclusion, a few more general points need to be made. Beyond the comforting, convenient, and self-exculpatory myths that stand in the way of honest confrontation with the Holocaust, there are other obstacles that will challenge future Holocaust education and memorialization. There is, of course, Holocaust denial in all its forms: minimization, trivialization, relativization, inversion (portraying Jews as perpetrators, as today's Nazis), as well as outright denial of basic facts. In addition, with the passage of

time, one has encountered official efforts in some countries to distort the history of the Holocaust as part of the rewriting of a national narrative. Most often such efforts seek to limit perpetrators and/or collaborators to certain narrowly defined groups and to establish the innocence or even “innocent victim” status of the rest of society. It is difficult to admit that during the Holocaust whole societies failed. Government sponsorship can make available substantial financial and human resources for such purposes, and can even call into existence new institutes, museums, and curricula to support the distortion. One may be able to predict with some assurance that people will understand that naming a new organization the *Veritas* History Institute, as has happened recently in Hungary, does not guarantee that the institute’s product will be *truthful*. But it is essential to recognize the threat that such developments represent to future Holocaust memorialization and education.

Holocaust study requires scrutiny of the behavior of our churches, and dealing with the interface of faith and history is every bit as difficult as dealing with the interface of politics and history. Because the Holocaust was an international as well as a national phenomenon, serious Holocaust study and memorialization require the mastery of multiple languages and a policy of open access to archives. Today, however, language study is in decline, and archival access policies are tightening in many countries.

Because there are so many obstacles and because there is so much to learn – about human potentials, democracy and dictatorship, free versus controlled civil societies, prejudice and its consequences, genocide, relations among states – and because of the horrific consequences when states and individuals make choices that permit or encourage prejudices, racism, and the denigration of the dignity of all human beings, Holocaust memorialization and education remain essential. A sound future cannot be built on distortion and misrepresentation. This should be obvious, and particularly so

in countries that suffered half a century of communist rule following World War II. History must be confronted head-on. One cannot change historical facts once they have occurred. The truth matters.



# THE FUTURE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORIALIZATION: INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES

## KAREN JUNGBLUT

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When asked to speak at this conference and contribute to the conference proceedings, I was asked to address the following two questions: What might teaching of the Holocaust look like in 2050? What could we do now to shape what it may look like then?

My answer to the first question is: I do not know. I wish I had a crystal ball that actually works, and then I would tell you. Since I do not, however, I would like to spend some time on the second question and examine how one could shape future developments – at least in regards to what we at the University of Southern California Shoah Foundation envision. In what follows I describe the USC Shoah Foundation’s work and, in particular, how our “memory work” supports education and research. Before I go in that direction, however, it is important to outline how the USC Shoah Foundation began; therefore, I briefly discuss its creation and then focus on examples of current and future directions.

When *Schindler’s List* first moved audiences in 1993 and 1994, few could have predicted the impact the film would have, not only on popular awareness, but also on Holocaust and genocide studies around the world. One of the film’s significant outgrowths was the creation of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 1994,

which today is called the USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education, and in 2006 it became part of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

The USC Shoah Foundation conducted nearly 52,000 audio-visual testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust in fifty-six different countries and in thirty-two different languages between the years of 1994 and 2000. The archive is called the Visual History Archive and is now digitally accessible at over fifty universities and museums worldwide. It is available in Hungary: at Central European University and recently also at Eötvös Loránd University. Nearly 1,300 testimonies contained in the archive were conducted in Hungarian, of which nearly 800 testimonies were conducted in Hungary.

The idea of the USC Shoah Foundation was conceived during the filming of *Schindler’s List* (1993) as a response to survivors who were on the set for a variety of reasons, including an oft-cited desire to observe the filming and how it portrayed “their story”. During interactions with the filmmaker Steven Spielberg, survivors often stated that they appreciated that this story of Schindler was told, but that they also wanted to have the chance to tell their own story. From these interactions, Spielberg was inspired to create an organization that would provide as many Holocaust survivors as possible with the opportunity to tell their stories, in their own words, and on camera. Spielberg intended to make these recordings themselves available to a wide variety of audiences around the world.

The goal of reaching 50,000 was based on a number of criteria including: financial and technical resources available, an estimate of how many survivors were still living, as well as an estimate of how many would want and be able to share their story on camera. The Foundation that was born to realize these goals was not the only organization that collected and conducted video testimony nor was it the first. There were many local and regional organizations, grassroots initiatives, and museums that provided this opportunity for many years beforehand. All of which was and is an important contribution to memory work, and the USC Shoah Foundation benefitted from the work of these other organizations. In fact, the Foundation developed its approach and methodologies when documenting these life histories on a global scale in consultation with colleagues from the field.

Capturing nearly 52,000 interviews quickly became a global undertaking: survivors all over the world came forward, and the Foundation trained about 2,000 interviewers and worked with 1,000 videographers, as well as regional coordinators who coordinated these testimonies locally. While most of those who gave testimony were Jewish survivors, we also interviewed homosexual survivors, Jehovah's Witness survivors, liberators and liberation witnesses, political prisoners, rescuers and aid providers, Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) survivors, survivors of "eugenics" policies, and war crimes trials participants. Within several years, the Foundation's Visual History Archive held nearly 52,000 video testimonies in thirty-two languages, representing fifty-six countries; it is the largest archive of its kind in the world and has grown since. The USC Shoah Foundation has undertaken efforts to include testimonies from interested organizations that collected audiovisual Holocaust testimonies prior to 1994 and has made new efforts to include survivors and witnesses from other genocides. The USC Shoah Foundation now holds over 53,000 testimonies in thirty-nine languages from sixty-one countries.

From the start, the effort aimed at achieving multiple goals: to give a voice to Holocaust survivors and other witnesses so generations never forget what so few lived to tell; to capture on videotape the faces and voices of survivors and other witnesses before it was too late; to return the testimonies back to the communities from where they came; to provide access to the largest possible audience in the greatest number of places; to develop and support educational methodology and materials; and to support research with real-life examples and provide solutions for real-world problems.

A common theme among survivors who came forward to tell their story was their motivation to do so because their relatives did not survive. They wanted to find a way to remember them by talking about what happened to them, and by talking about those who did not survive, to memorialize them. Another common theme was that most survivors told their story and experiences because they wanted – that is want – to contribute to educating new generations about the past, in the hope that the education will provide a hopeful future for the world. That is, when asked about what message they may have for the future, most interpreted that question as a question about the future of humanity and provided answers that spoke to wanting to have their story be a chance for the world to learn – what might also be described as learning how to resist the path to genocide.

As part of the work, these testimonies were digitized, are being preserved in perpetuity at the University of Southern California, and are made available through a variety of digital platforms. The Visual History Archive is connected to fifty universities, like Central European University. It allows access to nearly 53,000 testimonies and is geared towards scholars and tertiary education. Meanwhile, the platform called iWitness, accessible anywhere with internet connectivity, has been developed and geared towards secondary education in the United States at first, but it has quickly become a global platform and is used in over fifty-seven countries – in

many we are working with local partners to adopt it to the local environment. The ability to search over 1,300 testimonies, enables teachers to use either existing educational lesson activities or create their own for one's classroom, enables students to edit and create their own video essays, and has provided profound learning potential.

Whether for research and teaching in tertiary education or secondary education, our approach revolves around the use of audiovisual testimony of genocide survivors and witnesses. Audio-visual testimony and all of the factors that define how it is captured and delivered – the individual, personal story; the medium of digitized audiovisual format, where you can not only listen to the person tell it in their own words but also watch and observe the body language that accompanies the story; as well as the medium through which it is delivered, the internet that provides access to a global audience – represent an intersection of emotional and cognitive learning opportunities and provide a dynamic platform for the teaching of digital literacy and digital citizenship skills.

The Visual History Archive reaches teachers, scholars, and their students in many different countries as well. To date, over four hundred university courses ranging from business ethics, history, social sciences, neuro-sciences, anthropology, gender studies, to film studies have used the testimonies from the Visual History Archive. For example, the archive has been integrated into courses at Central European University, and Prof. Andrea Pető has created interesting collaborative efforts and course construction with other universities, including with Smith College in the United States.

As mentioned above, the USC Shoah Foundation has, since 2008, been working with partners to expand the archive to include testimonies of other genocides. For instance, we work with colleagues in Rwanda on collecting testimonies – sixty-five of which have been integrated into the Visual History Archive, on building an audiovisual archive with survivor and witness testimo-

nies, as well as on piloting the IWitness platform and teacher training in Rwanda using Holocaust survivor testimonies as well as Rwandan testimonies locally. Initial feedback and results of the evaluation process that accompanies this pilot work show similar feedback to what we have received in the US and other countries from students and teachers alike: the audiovisual medium and the personal stories speak to the students in a way a textbook does not. Students find a way to connect to the person, the experience of the person; it becomes personal, and history becomes an emotional and cognitive learning experience. Students seem to respond in a positive and engaging way to the discussion of historical events because of the intimacy and "life" that these testimonies bring to historical events. The experience in Rwanda has also been that of a country where the genocide is "only" twenty years past and where discussing the genocide and the ideology behind it has its own tremendous challenges: partially due to "it" only being twenty years ago, partially due to the political climate, and partially due to other reasons. What we have found is that when introducing the Holocaust and testimony, teachers who were worried or afraid to teach about the Rwandan genocide, find that teaching about the Holocaust provides a pathway to a conversation of what happened in 1994 and to the events that led up to it. In addition to Rwanda, we have been working on including testimonies with survivors and witnesses of the Armenian and Cambodian genocides, the genocide in Darfur, as well as the Nanjing Massacres of 1937 by Japanese occupying forces.

Being at a research university, our work is closely associated with research efforts around genocide and the collecting, archiving, and distributing of audiovisual testimonies related to these events. As such, we are interested in decoding the conditions that lead to genocide and developing effective strategies for stemming violence and intolerance, which requires building research pathways among a range of disciplines, from

public policy to the humanities to neuroscience. It demands collaborations among archivists, historians, educators, ethicists, technologists, and policy experts.

Let me briefly point to two new programmatic efforts in this area:

a) As we are in our twentieth anniversary year, the Institute will be holding an international conference called "Media, Memory, and Digital Humanities: Exploring the Trajectories of *Schindler's List*" in November to explore history and culture leading up to the release of *Schindler's List* (1993) – and the many research and educational developments that grew from the film, including the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation established in 1994, which became the USC Shoah Foundation in 2006. It will consider the intersections of media and memory and how print, television, film, the Internet, and other media shape the way the past is remembered and retold, especially by the survivors and witnesses. In addition, the conference will explore the challenges and opportunities of new technologies on research and teaching in the arts and sciences, from emerging publishing platforms to the use of functional magnetic resonance imaging to map human emotion.

b) Another programmatic innovation tied to the Institute's twentieth anniversary year, is the recently launched USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research that will focus its research efforts on the interdisciplinary study of currently under-researched areas. The Center will view Holocaust and Genocide research as inherently interdisciplinary. This will not be set out as the work of various disciplines working together, but rather the transcendence of differentiated disciplines to bring innovative understanding as well as a global approach.

The Center, while open to a variety of scholarly investigations and research efforts, will focus on three areas specifically within the next several years:

a) The Interdisciplinary study of Mass Violence and Resistance will examine the Holocaust and other instances of systematic

mass violence with a special focus on what enables people to stop, slow down, or resist violent developments in societies. The Center will encourage scholarship that examines genocide broadly, including especially the murder of European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators, the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, and the recent genocide in Rwanda, while expanding to consider a wide array of historical and contemporary events of systematic mass violence and violent inter-group relationships in all parts of the world. The Center will develop an innovative and interdisciplinary research methodology to examine how resistance to the momentum of genocide occurs. Thus, it will look at the resistance to mass violence at individual, group, and societal levels. While there is work being done in the field providing comparative historical insights, diagnostics, and predictive models for the likelihood of mass violence and genocide, there is very little research being conducted on the conditions that enable individuals, groups, and societies to inhibit the course to genocidal violence. Research will target the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions that enable people to withstand the promotion of prejudice and violence, as well as the role networks and resources play for individuals and groups resisting mass violence.

b) A second focus will be Interdisciplinary Research on Violence, Emotion and Behavioral Change, which will integrate work in the burgeoning fields of memory studies and emotion and affect research, especially as they relate to understanding the role of testimonial narratives in genocidal and traumatic contexts. Since affect and emotion, as experienced under the impact of violence, play crucial roles in memory formation and narrative constructions, the Center will focus on how empathy, sympathy, anger, and other emotions are created, transmitted, received, understood, and transformed into active engagement. This research area will sit at the intersection of psychology, behavioral studies, critical studies, narrative stud-

ies, film studies, and neuroscience. It will seek to understand the role and impact of violence and emotion for the interviewee and for those who engage the content through the medium.

c) The third area, Digital Genocide Research, will explore the ways in which large data sets, such as the digitized and fully indexed 52,000 survivor and witness interviews, can assist our understanding of genocide. As the collections grow, the data available for comparative analysis will grow with it and provide an increasingly rich resource of digital material. Research projects envisioned include geographic and spatial research examining how genocidal policy and topography are related. The development of new algorithms to interrogate the Visual History Archive (and other big-data sets) will enable the examination of how genocidal policy might have been deployed according to topographical convenience, or how geographic and population density indicators could provide insight to the possibility of resistance and rescue. This research group will bring together the disciplines of computer science, digital humanities, geographic information science, pure and applied mathematics, as well as a number of humanities, social science, and hard science scholars seeking to identify data and digital-based solutions pertinent to their research.

These three research areas pose fundamental questions that are being addressed right now, but the model of continued questioning, systematic examination, and adopting and responding to new technologies will provide the framework for future directions.

In conclusion, the direction we are taking in education and scholarly research has at its center audiovisual testimony of survivors and witnesses of genocides. We are focused on providing the opportunity for those who wish to talk about their experiences, giving a voice to those whose lives were threatened for who they were and who wish to leave behind a legacy not only for their families but the world at large – and who might find in this work some hope in humanity, that the

world is interested in their lives and experiences. On the pedagogical front we focus on enabling the use of these testimonies through technology and academic and educational programs in the hopes that, by 2050, we will have evolved and developed models and frameworks that provide successful early intervention if not prevention, hopefully even sooner than 2050, so that we can actually conclude in conferences such as these that the lessons were learned.

## **PART 1**

# **1.2 HOLOCAUST DISCOURSES NOW**

# TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST AS PART OF LOCAL HISTORY: THE CASE OF DENMARK<sup>1</sup>

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If the Holocaust becomes too much of a universal history lesson there is a risk that we will lose the local aspects and, with them, the impact of these important history lessons as well. With this contribution to the conference publication, I share some of my thoughts on the relationship between Holocaust education and Holocaust history, and how this relationship has developed during recent years. I do this by presenting the experience gained in Denmark over the past decade and by giving a general overview of Holocaust memory as it emerged in Europe from the mid-1990s. One cannot understand the situation in Denmark without considering the general European context. There are, however, certain elements that are specific to Denmark, the most important being Denmark's experience during the Holocaust where more than 95% of the Jewish population managed to flee to Sweden with the help of the local population, the resistance movement, Danish authorities, and members of civil society (Bak 2010).

From an international perspective, this rescue operation is considered unique, and what is generally referred to as the "Danish Rescue" stands as a light in the very dark history of the Holocaust. For the same reason, little attention was paid in Denmark, un-

til recently, to the history of the Holocaust, including other aspects of Danish Holocaust history. It should also be noted that Holocaust education is not mandatory in Denmark. However, since January 2003, Denmark has commemorated the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides on the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, which, as in several other European countries, is marked on the twenty-seventh of January, the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

In observance of this day, several educational activities take place around the country, through which Danish children, fifteen years and older, are introduced to the history of the Holocaust and other genocides. The activities are financed by the Danish government and have for more than a decade been organized by the Danish Institute for International Studies in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. One may ask, why Danish school children have, since January 2003, been introduced to the history of the Holocaust and other genocides? In answering this question, we need to view the development in Denmark as part of a general European trend that occurred during the 1990s.

## *Holocaust Memory in Europe after 1989*

Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, the issue of the Holocaust – how it is remembered and the influence that that memory exerts on the present – has played a, perhaps unexpectedly, important role both in current European memory culture and European politics. First of all, there are the many official apologies offered by European heads of state during the 1990s: France and the Netherlands in 1995 and Poland in 2001. Even Denmark, with its sterling record of

<sup>1</sup> An earlier and shorter version of this paper is published in the UN Discussion Papers series by the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, September 2013: "Remembering the Holocaust: The Legacy of the Danish Rescue," <http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/docs/paper24.shtml>.

rescue, apologized officially in August 2005 for having denied Jewish refugees entry to Denmark, sending them back to an uncertain fate in Germany.

Added to these national acts of contrition are the resolution adopted by the European Parliament in 2005 to preserve the memory of the Holocaust and the Stockholm Declaration, signed by the heads of state and representatives of forty countries in January 2000. The Stockholm Declaration also established certain basic commitments on the part of its signatories to promote Holocaust education, remembrance, and research. These national and international efforts serve as evidence of a general acknowledgement in Europe, and the rest of the world, that the Holocaust has come to play a crucial role in European and national memories.

In this context, Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, together with Tony Blair and Bill Clinton, established the International Task Force on Holocaust Education Remembrance, and Research in 1998. Today, the renamed International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance consists of thirty-one member states with their government representatives and national experts. This institutionalization was intimately linked with an emerging political culture, based on international law and human rights. The lessons of the Holocaust were to be taught and remembered for future generations in order to help prevent future genocides and to promote democracy and human rights. The Holocaust became in that sense the *paradigmatic* genocide, as noted by Swedish historians Klas-Göran Karlsson and Kristian Gerner (Gerner and Karlsson 2005).

One way of understanding this development is by considering the impact on European consciousness of the wars of succession in the former Yugoslavia. Following the collapse of communism, what happened there came as a shock to post-1989 Europe – a continent full of hope and dreams for a new beginning. New questions arose: What went wrong? How could Europe passively look on while their Serbian neighbors slaughtered

8,000 Muslims? Had Europe not learned from the past? Was Europe about to repeat the same kind of madness – the killing of innocent civilians on a massive scale – as happened during the Second World War? Was ethnic nationalism returning? Or rather, had ethnic nationalism ever really disappeared?

The shock not only led to a debate about Europe's unconforted past, but also contributed to an increased interest, both within the general public and among politicians, in the Holocaust. One could say, therefore, that the growing interest in the Holocaust was led by an increased focus on international human rights, a development that Nathan Sznajder and Daniel Levy also point to in their book *Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (2005) and which can be explained with what Ariel Colonomos has termed the moralizing of international relations that occurred during the 1990s (Colonomos 2008). Addressing crimes of the past and demanding historical justice can be a way to get access to the international political scene, something of particular importance for small states (Reiter and Gärtner 2001). Although we cannot neglect the national differences in each European country, stemming from different national experiences during the Second World War, we can understand that what happened in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s was, nevertheless, the beginning of a Europeanization of the Holocaust, both as memory and as a moral guidepost.

#### *Lessons Learned*

It is within this framework that we have to understand why a "righteous" nation like Denmark considered it necessary to establish a Holocaust Remembrance Day, which is observed each year as a theme-day, "Auschwitz Day", in schools around the country. On January 27, Danish youngsters learn about the Holocaust and other genocides, and the general public participates in ceremonies held by the municipalities around the country. What lessons can be learned from a country where Holocaust education was



only recently introduced and which has a unique status in the history of the Holocaust because of the unprecedented rescue of its Jews in October 1943?

First, we must conclude that, although the annual "Auschwitz Day" is a popular activity among most Danish high schools, we do not know very much about how effective it is as a vehicle for Holocaust education. From a study conducted by a group of Danish and German scholars, we know that, for a Danish student, the Holocaust represents the strongest lesson to be learned from the Second World War (Bjerg 2011), a fact confirmed by a recent poll conducted by the Danish daily *Berlingske Tidende*. Danish youngsters tend to refer to the history of the Second World War not as the history of the German occupation of Denmark, but as the history of the Holocaust (*Berlingske* 30.09.2013), suggesting a transition from a national narrative to a global one (Bjerg and Lenz 2007).

Second, during the past one to two decades, research has provided us with more knowledge about the local aspects of Holocaust history. The Holocaust has become more nuanced and multifaceted, which, in my view, requires that we reevaluate how to teach the subject today. Allow me to emphasize my point. As mentioned, "Auschwitz Day" was marked for the first time in Denmark in January 2003. Every year since then, on January 27, victims are commemorated at ceremonies around the country, and students learn about the Holocaust and other genocides during specifically organized workshops and seminars. As such, "Auschwitz Day" works "to improve the awareness of the Holocaust among Danish students" and the principle that one should "never forget what the past can teach the future" (10 Years ITF-folder 2008, 36-37).

Thus, "Auschwitz Day" is dedicated to commemorating the victims and supporting the survivors, while promoting education and public awareness about the Holocaust and other genocides in primary and secondary schools, in universities, and in the public

at large. Or, as stated officially: "Denmark believes that keeping alive the memory of the Holocaust through education, research and commemorative activities is an important way to teach future generations about fundamental human rights, and the necessity to protect them elsewhere" (10 Years ITF-folder 2008, 36).

However, though we have learned that political will can be activated and can lead to institutions like the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and the Swedish Forum for Living History, to mention a few examples, we are not certain about the impact of these institutions. We do not know whether teaching the history of the Holocaust and other genocides actually helps to create more tolerant and non-discriminating people; we do not know whether this teaching actually keeps the memory of the Holocaust alive; and we do not know whether teaching the Holocaust may have an unintended negative impact leading to Holocaust fatigue and denial.

Additionally, during the past ten years, newly developed research has taught us more about local perpetrators, particularly in Eastern European countries. Naturally, Holocaust historians knew about the local perpetrators and the intimate killings that took place on the Eastern front at the beginning of the war. But the increased activity that followed the Stockholm International Forum in January 2000 was followed by an increased interest and, therefore, an expanded knowledge in the general public about the different aspects and phases of the murder of European Jews.

As such, the Holocaust has for the past decade become more than Auschwitz and the gas chambers. The public knows more about the intimate killings that occurred in places like Ukraine and Belarus, as illustrated by the debate following the publication of Timothy Snyder's book *Bloodlands* (2010), and today we know much more about the local perpetrators. We know more about Jewish life before the Holocaust and about Jewish life during the Holocaust.

This development also includes the case of Denmark, where for many decades the rescue of the Danish Jews overshadowed the other, and less heroic, aspects of Danish Holocaust history. Today, thanks in part to the Stockholm Declaration and the globalization of Holocaust memory, we know more about Jews who fled Nazi Germany only to be denied entry to Denmark (Banke 2005; Kirchhoff 2005; Rünitz 2005; Kirchhoff and Rünitz 2007), and we know about those Jews in Denmark who were not rescued in October 1943, but were deported to Theresienstadt (Levin 2001; Lundtofte 2004; Sode-Madsen 1995; 2003).

Also, thanks to a new generation of historians, we know that Danish industries and the Danish agricultural sector among other things collaborated with the Germans during the Second World War (Lund 2005; Andersen 2003). A recent study has also provided us with more knowledge about the Danish Waffen SS and the young men who left for Germany to volunteer as soldiers on the Eastern Front (Bundgaard, Poulsen, and Smith 1998).

#### *How to Teach the Holocaust*

These recent developments within the historiography of Danish history during the Holocaust have to be integrated into the teaching of the Holocaust. How, for example, did liberal, democratic Denmark react *before the war* to the very un-liberal phenomenon in neighboring Germany – the persecution of the Jews? And how should we understand the connection between Denmark's restrictive refugee policy in the 1930s and the rescue of the Danish Jews several years later? Is there any connection at all?

I believe there is, and it has to do with the emerging welfare state and the well-defined national community in Denmark. The very system, which in the 1930s was so intent on protecting itself and its own citizens by keeping Jewish refugees out, safeguarded the belongings left behind in Denmark of the Jews who fled to Sweden. The same Danish state that was reluctant to take in Jewish refugees during the 1930s, took action to help its Jewish citizens and residents flee persecution during the fall of 1943.

This paradox is what I have described as the ambivalence of Danish Holocaust history (Banke 2013). How could the Danes be so restrictive in keeping German Jewish refugees out, on the one hand, and carry out the remarkable act of civil courage in helping Jews escape to Sweden, on the other hand? The answer lies within the historical context. German Jewish refugees of the 1930s came to Denmark as immigrants and were considered a threat to Danish labor and to the social stability of Danish society. If the Danish state took in too many immigrants with Jewish background, many believed that there was a risk that Denmark, like Germany, would have a so-called "Jewish problem".

The general assumption within the Danish administration was that too many immigrants with Jewish background would lead to widespread anti-Semitism within the Danish population. The restrictive refugee policy of the 1930s was, in that sense, a way to protect the Danish labor market from immigrant labor and to avoid anti-Semitism. For Denmark, the 1930s was the decade during which a new social contract was finally established. Denmark became a national community consolidated around the state as the all-embracing instrument of social security.

Progressive economists and politicians of the interwar period used much of their energy to develop and disseminate precisely this idea and thus could not immediately grasp the repercussions of the refugee problem that the Nazis had created with their policies. They could condemn it, they could distance themselves from it, but they could not bring refugees into the new social patronage model. The refugee lay outside their field of vision.

The important point here is that the social economic thinking of the 1930s about an all-embracing, equality-based state – whose primary task was to prevent social discontent – led to a system that viewed refugees in a rigid, restrictive manner based on the principle of protecting the country's own citizens and its national labor market. Hence Denmark had to be protect-

ed against immigrant labor, even if these immigrants were, in fact, refugees from a totalitarian system, fleeing discrimination, persecution, and eventually deportation as well.

So where does this paradox then bring us? And why is it important today when teaching about the Holocaust to see the Danish rescue in a broader historical context? First of all, the Danish example shows us how differently a society can respond to persecution and mass violence depending on the circumstances. What, during the 1930s, appeared to be a restrictive strategy which prevented entry to many who sought refuge, may have made the remarkable rescue operation that took place in October 1943 possible. In history, as in politics, there are no straight answers, no stories without complexities and paradoxes.

The history of the Holocaust is, in part, local history with local aspects and local actors. In some cases, the local aspects are already integrated. Additionally, a country's individual experience of past atrocities, human rights abuses, and genocide is also an important element in its definition of Holocaust education. In fact, you may argue, as do leva Gundare and Pieter Batelaan, that "Holocaust education is not, and should not be, the same everywhere" (Gundare and Batelaan 2003, 152). But integrating Holocaust history into local history can often be easier said than done, which brings me to my third and final point, namely the relation between teaching the Holocaust as a universal lesson and as part of the human rights curriculum, on one hand, and teaching the Holocaust as part of local history, on the other hand.

If the Holocaust becomes too much of a universal history lesson, as indicated by among others Levy and Sznajder in their work about global memory, there is a risk that we will lose the local aspects and, with them, the impact of these important history lessons as well (Levy and Sznajder 2005). Thus, local aspects of the Holocaust and local experience with human atrocities, human rights abuses, and genocide have to be integrated into a country's definition of Holocaust education.

There has to be a relationship between the universal message about "never again", on the one hand, and the local experiences of persecution, genocidal violence, mass atrocities, and racism and discrimination, on the other hand.

We can observe this phenomenon in the European context in the case of the former communist countries, which, after becoming members of the European Union, insisted that their experiences with the other totalitarian past – with communism – should be acknowledged and remembered in the same way as the history of National Socialism and the Holocaust. As Estonian scholar Maria Mälksoo argues, the Baltic and Polish memory politics have brought up the controversial and intensely debated comparison between Nazi and Stalinist regimes and their respective crimes, thus contesting the uniqueness of Nazi crimes and questioning the singularity of the Holocaust as *the* crime against humanity of the twentieth century (Mälksoo 2009).

The challenges that Holocaust education in Europe faces currently is how to balance the universal legacy of the Holocaust with local history of persecution, human rights abuses, genocide, and political mass violence. How is it possible to find a balance and avoid that the never-again imperative becomes such a universalized slogan that the message loses its actual impact? After a decade of intense activity, it may be time to evaluate the efforts that have emerged and readdress how to teach and learn about the Holocaust, based on gained experiences and new research, in a way that makes sense for the next generation as well.

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# HOLOCAUST HISTORY AND HISTORICAL LEARNING

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Questions of historical learning are in the forefront of public attention as this text is being written. The Ukrainian crisis of 2014 has triggered several possible historical lessons. Is President Vladimir Putin a traditional expansionist Russian autocrat or a nationalistic Soviet dictator, bent on reinstating Russian and Soviet empires? Should his Crimean aggression rather be compared to Adolf Hitler's attacks on Austria and Czechoslovakia in the late interwar era? What are the lessons we ought to learn, in a West that has suddenly become more than a point on the compass again? Should we be content with learning that Russia is different and accept Russian supremacy in the post-Soviet territory, or should we learn the opposite historical lesson that tells us that dictators must be stopped in time, so as to not encourage further aggression? Should we try to nip the Russian aggression in the bud instead of, like Neville Chamberlain in his time, insisting on "peace in our time" at all costs?

It goes without saying that surprising external crises in general, and those involving Russia in particular, tend to pose serious, sharp-edged questions of what lessons history teaches us. Our relationship with Russia is always historically grounded. However, gradual changes might also bring about ambitions to learn from the past, if the topic involved awakens strong echoes in the historical culture in which we evaluate what history is worth teaching and learning. During the last two decades, Holocaust history has obviously occupied such a position when Europeans have made sense of their histo-

ry. Questions of and answers to what we can or ought to learn from the Holocaust have abounded in the cultural, educational, political, and scholarly spheres. My contribution to the conference proceedings will follow in these footsteps.

## *Two Basic Answers*

What can we learn from history? The classical question whether a human being or a society, by means of experience and memory or through more systematic history training, can learn to orientate itself better in life with than without this history, is always as tempting as it is difficult to answer. Two fundamental answers have traditionally been given in philosophical literature. The first is Hegel's, ascertaining that the only thing we can learn from history is that we can never learn anything. History never repeats itself. However, this does not contradict the idea that history leaves more or less regular traces, patterns, and "cases" from which we can learn. Hegel himself favored the idea that any history contains the seed of its own destruction, a contradiction that dialectically carries history forward towards higher stages of development. The professional historian's response is prescribed by the idea that history is eternal change, which makes learning situations other than those connected to change and development non-existent. The wider societal repudiation of the idea is that the ambition to learn from history throughout history has been connected to evil themes, such as biology and race, Nazism and communism, and the legitimation of non-democratic power.

The other fundamental answer is Cicero's famous dictum that history is the master of life. When history comes close to repetition, wise men, provided with leadership and strategic judgment based on relevant

historical knowledge, can avoid the mistakes that the first time resulted in war, genocide, economic crises, and other human catastrophes. Thus, history acts as an early warning system. A political use of history, built on a straight relation between “now” and “then”, often starts with a “syndrome” that is supposed to transcend historical boundaries, such as the “Munich” one, based on the idea that an external aggression that is not taken seriously and actively counteracted risks repetition. Such a political use of history is fomented by the fact that some boundary historical events are considered more valuable to learn from and are more relatable to present concerns than others, the Holocaust being the primary example. This means that you can make simplistic political gains by comparing everything from abortion policies to the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians with the Jewish genocide. Similarities are emphasized, while differences are held back.

#### *The Dual Predicament*

One of the real problems related to the idea of learning from history is that we are in the middle of it. One side of us is that we are history. This extreme proximity to history is something we cannot avoid. The best question we could pose to uphold a beneficial analytical and critical distance to history is a genetic one. This means that we depict ourselves, our society, and the history we focus on as the temporary final point of a linear history in constant motion. We learn from roots and developments, causes and effects, intentions and consequences that must be laid bare in order for us to explain what we and the world have become, and why it is so. Alternative and counterfactual scenarios are natural parts of this historical thinking. The genetic perspective, so salient among professional historians, normally highlights unique events and developments, situated along the chronological line, but not necessarily related to the present world. Its weak point is that any history is situated there, and that the genetic perspective in itself lacks a mechanism for selection. Consequently, any

history might be interesting for a professional historian.

Luckily, this is just half the human predicament. The other side is that we, being history, are also simultaneously *making* history. As human beings, we can rise above life itself and make use of our experience, history, and memory to understand our present situation, make sense of the past and orientate ourselves towards the future. Quite contrary to the genetic “we-are-history” perspective, the genealogical idea, related to the “we-make-history” notion, is that history is retrospective, starting from the concerns and questions of posterity, who turn to history for guidelines and meaning in life. When turning back, we look for continuities and repetitions from which to learn, often elaborated as analogies or comparisons. As mentioned, such a retrospective operation is not arbitrary and spontaneous, but is dependent on established, pre-formed cultural values. Thus, when we address history genealogically, we on the one hand actively make use of it to satisfy various needs and interests, but on the other hand we are already culturally disposed to learn from some histories and to forget or repress others. Scholars such as Michel Foucault (2002) and Reinhart Koselleck (2000) have underlined this access to archeological strata or *Zeitschichten* that makes contact with history possible, but also provides it with restrictions.

Our dual historical predicament indicates that we must learn history genetically and genealogically at the same time. The perspectives support and reinforce each other. Genetic history demands a trigger, while genealogical history often is in bad need of a critical corrective. However, they are also open for qualifications. The most urgent one relates to the distinction between the unique and the general, between idiographic and nomothetic history. Most historians, oriented towards historical unicity, certainly deny that human beings always and everywhere are the same, but many would nevertheless argue that basic existential conditions are similar over time: we are born, eat, reproduce



ourselves, organize, make sense of our existence, and die. Ideas of enduring and solid structural conditions, connected to power, ownership, and culture, are often used to overcome the genetic-genealogical divide. Historical structures might also include theories and theses constructed on historical ground, such as "democratic state powers never perpetrate genocide". It has an implicit genetic approach in the fact that both democracy and genocide are latecomers in history. However, the real point of departure is rather genealogical, as a kind of historical invocation, closely related to the "Never again!" spell.

### *Three Learning Perspectives*

The conclusion of these philosophical or theoretical ideas is that we have three learning perspectives at our disposal if we intend to learn from Holocaust history: a genetic, a structural, and a genealogical one. All three of them must be addressed in the same learning process if we are looking for complex and multifaceted learning. The starting point of any learning process is the basic genealogical question: Why the Holocaust? Although few have denied its importance, and yet fewer have questioned its unique features as the great rupture of civilization, the question has been given a multitude of ideological, legal, moral, political, and scholarly answers (Karlsson and Zander 2003; 2006). In the latter sphere, prominent scholars such as Paul Ricœur (2004) and Jörn Rüsen (2001; 2004) have reflected on how we might heal this open wound of our historical culture. Both indicate the general difficulty of dealing with a catastrophic or traumatic historical experience as a genocide, which is not naturally digested into a meaningful narrative and which tend to be handled differently from one generation and nation to another. Nevertheless, both agree on the necessity to find good ways to learn from the Holocaust. Many recent general answers involve traditional genealogical concepts such as compassion, tolerance, regret, responsibility, and guilt. Furthermore, contemporary historical culture often dwells on

sorrow, suffering, and victimhood as points of departure when we try to make sense of inhumanity. It is still true that the victors control history, but in the last decades, they have entered into strong competition with the victims of history.

In this analysis, we should not leave out of consideration the more instrumental motives of the Holocaust occupation, such as legitimization. This strategy of historical culture is not necessarily incompatible with the more "noble", "human", or "progressive" needs and interests just mentioned. The Holocaust interest of the last two decades is an important aspect of a cultural integration process within the European Union, providing it with a founding history as well as a crucial motive force for its existence. In the EU rhetoric, the organization was set up to break with the war and genocide of the past, and its existence is a guarantee that the anti-Semitism, racism, and xenophobia that risks bringing about another Holocaust will not find a European foothold. Any attempts to deny or banalize the Holocaust should be counteracted. This idea of a founding and acting history of the EU is evident from this Presidency statement from 2005:

*The significance of the Holocaust is universal. But it commands a place of special significance in European remembrance. It is in Europe that the Holocaust took place. And, like the United Nations, it is out of that dark episode that a new Europe was born. European Union member states work together to promote peace and democracy within its borders and beyond. This is something which we could not have imagined 60 years ago. Yet some members of our societies still face intolerance and prejudice. The best tribute we can pay to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust is to speak out against such attitudes in our own communities. (Jones Parry 2005)*



This development certainly helps to explain why my own country, Sweden, became a leading actor in Holocaust historical culture within the European context into which Sweden entered in 1995. Before that, Sweden was a bystander in European politics, one that for several postwar decades prided itself with standing outside European historical affairs in general, and war and genocide history in particular. Sweden represented the good history, Europe the evil one, it was more or less explicitly argued. The Swedish example demonstrates well the important role that Holocaust history has played in the Europeanization of normally strongly nationally-colored historical cultures<sup>1</sup>

This analysis points to the importance of bringing the genealogical history together with a genetic perspective with analytical, critical, and reflexive qualities. There is a need to learn that the Holocaust for several decades sank into oblivion, or rather was considered an embarrassment in the postwar era, dominated by what Jeffrey Alexander (2004) has called a progressive story of social and economic progress and lack of global war. The lessons related to why the surviving eyewitnesses fell silent and their children unambiguously turned their heads towards the future are interesting indeed. This certainly also goes for the entire process of the gradual rediscovery of the genocide in the next generation. Today, not only the Swedes but most people in the West have realized that being a Holocaust bystander is a totally unacceptable position, close to being an accomplice. Crimes against humanity engage us all.

What is more, there is a tendency in genealogical history to situate its object outside or beyond history, transforming it from a factual event of empirical evidence to a myth-

ical or even religious event. It is extremely unfortunate if the Holocaust is allowed to leave the historical realm. Therefore, learning must include strong elements of historiization. Holocaust history must include basic genetic analyses of the ideological origin and political and social root system of the Jewish genocide, of intentionalist and functionalist interpretations, and of the effects of the genocide on the postwar world, just to name a few crucial tasks. Counterfactual analyses, so popular in present historical culture, should avoid any attempts to eliminate or reduce the Holocaust from the visual field, but could with advantage address important questions of the strength of the linear relationship between, on the one hand, the preudes of the Nazi destruction program, such as the Nuremberg laws, deportation plans, or ghettoization policies, and, on the other hand, the accomplished genocide.

The structural learning, finally, forces an approach that puts the Holocaust in a larger context of genocidal processes, regimes, and societies, thereby naturally addressing precarious comparative questions of Holocaust unicity, and even more precarious questions of interconnections between the Holocaust and other genocidal situations. The question whether the Holocaust was a secondary reaction to Soviet Communist terror, and if Hitler "learned" genocide from Lenin and Stalin, triggered the *Historikerstreit*, the German Historians' debate, in the 1980s (see Knowlton and Cates 1993). The answer from the absolute majority of the scholars was so unequivocally negative that few have dared to pose the question since then. The general approach, more popular among social scientists than with historians, is to analyze the systematic role of ideology, revolution, war, empire, or modernity in a genocidal situation. As mentioned before, the reason why the approach should be attractive even for advocates of historical learning is that the structural element serves to unite the genetic and genealogical perspectives. Anti-Semitism, in my mind the crucial condition for the perpetration of the Holocaust, can be ana-

1 The Swedish example is further analyzed in Klas-Göran Karlsson, "The Holocaust as Politics and Use of History – the Example of Living History," in *The Swedish Success Story?*, eds. Kurt Almqvist and Kay Glans (Stockholm: Axel and Margaret Ax:son Johnson Foundation, 2004), 241–51; Klas-Göran Karlsson, "The Holocaust, Communist Terror and the Activation of Swedish Historical Culture," in *Historical Memory Culture in the Enlarged Baltic Sea Region and Its Symptoms Today*, eds. Oliver Rathkolb and Imbi Sooman (Vienna: Vienna University Press, 2011), 195–212.

lyzed genetically, when we ask questions of the Holocaust ideological root system, such as how anti-Semitism was made part of political programs in many European countries in the early twentieth century. On the contrary, anti-Semitism is unfortunately also highly genealogically relevant in the present time, when this ideological infection spreads over Europe and combines to make the Holocaust the significant historical experience of modern history.

#### *The Communism–Nazism Nexus*

My final comment goes back to the sore point of the German *Historikerstreit*. In my opinion, we should venture to situate the Holocaust and Soviet Communist terror in the same historical narrative, not in order to place them on an equal footing, but to compare them. The triple analytical model I have suggested here should provide a guarantee that history will be learned in such a qualified way that both phenomena gain from it, separately and together. We need to analyze German and Russian-Soviet historical developments side by side, to see where they converge or repel one another; we need to scrutinize their totalitarian traits, including their systems and mechanisms of mass violence; and we need to study the perceptions and attitudes of the terror histories in the afterworld.

The best arguments for this learning process are probably that this is already being done in the broader historical culture and that the Holocaust, for better or for worse, always serves as a kind of genocide paradigm. If only in this genealogical sense, the two borderline histories rest on some joint archeological layers. The sedimentation is not only obvious from the fact that Gestapo and KGB used the same terror houses and camps in several parts of Europe, occupied both by Nazi Germany and Communist Soviet Union, but also from the fact that these buildings now serve as museums of these terror regimes. Consequently, we should not immediately reject the concept but reflect thoroughly on the complex learning of his-

tory when we are confronted by notions of a “Red Holocaust”.

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# RETURNING TO HISTORY: MEMORY AND HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

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In popular discourse the terms Nazism, fascism, and the Holocaust are used as measuring sticks for any kind of regime, event, or policy. There are, of course, times when comparisons or analogies are useful, but far too often expressions such as “fascism” and “Holocaust” are used in poor taste and even more frequently with little understanding of what these terms mean and/or the time period to which they are referring. For example, in May 2014 a Tennessee state senator wrote on his blog: “democrats bragging about the number of mandatory sign ups for Obamacare is like Germans bragging about the number of mandatory (sic) sign ups for ‘train rides’ for Jews in the 40s” (Humphrey 2014). We are also familiar with comparisons between the Holocaust and the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, or between Saddam Hussein and Adolf Hitler, or more recently between Vladimir Putin and Hitler (Dvorak 2014). Of course, such comments serve political goals, but they also demonstrate a basic lack of historical knowledge, specifically concerning what happened in the past and the arguments we use to talk about the past.

I find that the students who take my classes on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust may not be so cavalier with these expressions, but they, nevertheless, also have a fairly static and ahistorical understanding of the past. They tend to think that the Holocaust started in September 1939 with the German invasion of Poland or in 1933 with the Nazi

seizure of power. Worse still: according to a national survey, one-third of Americans either do not know that the Holocaust took place during the Second World War or believe that it took place at a different time (Novick 1999). Students fail to see the development that occurred; they fail to understand the Holocaust historically. For them (as well as for the general public) the Holocaust exists outside of time. To use the words of Jeffrey Alexander: the Holocaust becomes free-floating rather than situated – universal rather than particular (Alexander 2009). Students are often unable to understand that the Holocaust was a historical event that can be contextually defined and that narratives and memorials about the Holocaust are specific to the time during which they were written or created. The Holocaust for them is not something that happened, but rather a mystical, inexplicable phenomenon. My objective in this conference publication is to discuss why people seem to prefer to view the Holocaust as an ahistorical event, which I follow with an example of how I try to confront this situation with my students.

Acknowledgement of the dichotomy concerning historical and ahistorical explanations about the Holocaust is not new. According to the Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer:

*There is a very basic question that any research on the Holocaust faces, but that people rarely address consciously: was the Holocaust a historical event that, like all historical events, can be analyzed and understood, no less, though per-*

*haps no more, than any other historical event? Or is it something inexplicable, something that transcends the capability of humans to understand and internalize? Is there perhaps some inner substance in this particular series of events that is beyond the grasp of humans.* (Bauer 2009, 19)

I should explain at the beginning that I am a historian – a scholar used to working with written, visual, and oral sources. As a historian, I am more interested in specifics and the arguments that bind them together than in universalizing agendas, and I would agree with Hannah Arendt that the radical evil we connect to the Holocaust is specific to Nazism rather than part of the human condition (Jay 2009). In my teaching I put a lot of emphasis on the development of the Holocaust – in understanding the events, the context, the causes, and the contingencies.

The ahistorical approach to the Holocaust that has become common is often associated with arguments emphasizing uniqueness: in presenting the Holocaust as a distinctive and incomprehensible event. It appears to fall outside of history (Marrus 1987). According to Elie Wiesel, “The Holocaust cannot be described, it cannot be communicated, it is unexplainable” (quoted in Reichel 1976, 42). Christian theologians have made similar arguments, stating that the Holocaust is “the perfected figuration of the demonic” (Cohen 1981, 6-7, 32-33, 48; see also Modras 1995). And others argue that “over time the Holocaust moves from being considered a horrific and criminal by-product of a savage war to being seen as a core event in itself: a ‘trauma-drama’ and an ‘engorged’ symbol of ultimate evil” (Hartman 2009, x). Many scholars who approach the Holocaust from this perspective worry that if we do not emphasize absolute evil, we are diminishing the horrendous crimes committed. The Holocaust scholar Michael Marrus recognizes this and argues:

*Close scholarly attention, it is feared, might diminish the horror evoked by the event, or lessen the respect accorded the most traumatic experience of the Jewish people in living memory. A related apprehension is that the dispassionate rethinking of some traditional notions of Nazism and the Holocaust might end up by trivializing the fundamentally evil nature of the regime. To others, the Holocaust remains an embarrassment, either because of a lingering antipathy toward the victims or because of an assumption that extensive historical investigation might suggest awkward particularist commitments. For both groups, academic discussion of the Holocaust has been uncomfortable.* (1987, 1)

The perspective that emphasizes uniqueness and inexplicability is understandable, and, despite its insistence on uniqueness, it is also the perspective that often encourages comparisons, resulting in viewing the Holocaust as what Jeffrey Alexander calls a “bridging metaphor” that is “unique and nonunique at the same time” (quoted in Jay 2009, 111; see also Alexander 2009, 49ff.). This perspective may help educators teach about tolerance and prejudice, but it does not help us understand the past or come to terms with the past – to use another loaded expression. It does not allow us to carry out the historian’s craft, which Michael Marrus explains “is to get it right!” (2009, 74). I often tell my students that if they think that the Holocaust and its perpetrators represent pure evil, or what others have called “macro-evil” (Modras 1995, 231), then I do not know what I can teach them, since I cannot explain evil. I can only attempt to describe and perhaps explain human actions.

What I hope to teach students is not that the Nazis were inhuman, but that they were indeed human. They were like you and I. They – perpetrators and bystanders – faced choices and made decisions, and it is people who should be held responsible for what they did. I also am very careful about discussing causes, since all too often students want “the cause” to be remote and categorical or a link to the human condition. I would argue that no historical event is monocausal. We cannot describe Germans as “Hitler’s willing executioners”. History is not driven by forces beyond our control; it is directed by human beings and their decisions.

When I teach courses on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust I emphasize chronology – “change over time” or what Christopher Clark has called “sequences of interactions” (Clark 2012, xxvii) – and historiography, that is the various narratives about different topics. In trying to answer the question of “how” and to some extent “why” it happened, the students need to contextualize the sources and the narratives (which include memorials).

One way I have attempted to do this, in addition to regular classroom lectures and discussions, has been a documentary film project with a group of students concerning Holocaust education. The students enrolled in a class on documentary filmmaking, then they and I set out together to make a film, specifically about how the Holocaust is taught in upstate New York. Since the Holocaust is a subject in all public schools in the state, we wanted to investigate how teachers explained it to students.

The immediate objectives (as part of making the film) were different than a regular history course on the Holocaust, but the underlying goal was similar: to figure out how and why the Holocaust is taught – to discover the narratives used to explain the Holocaust. I wanted us to investigate whether the Holocaust was being taught historically. I should point out that for much of the time the students believed that they were only documenting Holocaust instruction; they struggled to understand that we were also

trying to be critical of the ahistorical presentations used by many instructors.

I asked the students to read Peter Novick’s book *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999) so as to encourage them to think about the role the Holocaust has come to play in our lives today: to contemplate why the Holocaust is taught and formulate questions and answers as to what we want young people to learn about the Holocaust. It was a long process – eventually taking up two semesters – during which we conducted interviews with numerous high school, junior high, and university instructors, as well as their students; brought a group of educators together to discuss Holocaust education; and edited the film.

In the end, our film, *Never Again: Lessons from the Holocaust*, portrays ways in which the Holocaust is taught in public schools as well as some of the concerns that I (and others) have when educators fail to treat the Holocaust as a historical event. All of the classroom examples and interviews with teachers that we used in the film represent the perspective that the Holocaust was a distinct event and that we need to identify with the victims. All the teachers feel strongly about its exclusiveness and at least one of the teachers idolizes Elie Wiesel and other Holocaust survivors. For her these people represent “good” and should serve as role models. Overwhelmingly, the teachers adhere to the common perspective that emphasizes uniqueness and absolute views of good and evil.

The second half of the film follows three high school teachers, a professor from the University of Albany, and a Holocaust survivor as they discuss the ways they convey the subject. The outcome of this meeting – mainly voiced by the university professor, who formulates the same argument that I am making in this paper in favor of teaching the Holocaust as a historical event – is that there are specific ways that the Holocaust is taught to students in upstate New York (and throughout the country). In our meeting there is a heated discussion concerning unique-

ness, during which the high school teachers insist that the Holocaust must be taught as an exclusive event; it cannot be compared to other forms of genocide. For them the Holocaust deserves to be treated differently because, unlike other known examples, it was carried out by an industrial, advanced society. The Holocaust survivor intervenes at this point and argues that victims of genocide in Bosnia or Rwanda did not stop and think to themselves that what was happening was not so bad, since the atrocities against them were not carried out by an industrial society. She points out that "suffering is suffering." The university professor also asks the teachers to think about the two things that they keep saying: "unique" and "never again", because they are not congruent. If one believes in uniqueness, then "never again" is not an issue. It will not and cannot happen again. As one might imagine, this leads to a great deal of tension during our discussion concerning Holocaust education.

My point in describing this is not necessarily to provide answers, but to demonstrate how the students and I wanted to confront the problem of Holocaust education – a problem that I see every semester with the students who enter my classes. They usually know something about the subject, but they do not understand the context; they do not understand how things changed over time. Instead they fixate on suffering and a struggle between good and evil. It is true – and this also is depicted in the film – that when high school students learn a very dyadic image of that time period, it makes my job as a university professor much easier. I simply have to deconstruct what they know. As the professor from the University of Albany told one of the high school teachers: his job is to desacralize people like Elie Wiesel. The film is meant to challenge us to think about why we teach the subject. Clearly, the Holocaust needs to be a major part of the curriculum, but what do we want the students to learn? Do we just want them to feel bad? Do we want them to have a static image of the 1930s and early 1940s? Do we want them to

make ahistorical comparisons?

My main objective in teaching the Holocaust is to encourage students to think about what happened historically, that is to see change over time, to ask how it happened, and to discover that our explanations are also contextually defined. I want to deconstruct, if need be, a static view of the Holocaust as well as discourage the students' desire to describe the past (and the present) as a struggle between good and evil. This may not always be the most popular approach to explaining the Holocaust, but it is the most truthful. Descriptions of Auschwitz as the "metonym for the human condition" (Jay 2009, 111) tend to universalize the Holocaust, which weakens our understanding of the past as well as our sense of historical development. The result is poorly informed students and sometimes offensive analogies, such as the one mentioned at the beginning of my contribution to the conference volume. Before we can compare the Holocaust to other forms of genocide, we need to understand what happened during the Second World War as well as how we have discussed and memorialized the Holocaust since 1945.

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## **PART 2**

# **2.1 BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF DIGITAL RESOURCES**

# NEW WAYS OF SEEING: DIGITAL TESTIMONIES, REFLECTIVE INQUIRY, AND VIDEO PEDAGOGY IN A GRADUATE SEMINAR

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The active inquiry process of working with video testimonies of Holocaust survivors from the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive (VHA) directs graduate students' attention to questions of representability and memorialization of the Holocaust (Dörner and Pető, forthcoming). In particular, multimedia projects embedded in the social sciences and humanities curricula at the graduate level give a special focus to the processes of researching conceptual questions through the development of new media narrative forms. For example, IWitness is a secure online tool for watching, searching, editing, and sharing the audio-visual contents provided by the USC Shoah Foundation.

In this contribution to the conference publication, we discuss and reflect on the multiple ways in which students integrated both the medium and the message in their projects, in order to arrive at a systematized inquiry about representation. We then inves-

tigate the question: to what degree did that process result in a reflective deconstruction and/or a conceptual reconstruction of memorialization.

## *Case Being Described*

The current analysis is based on undergraduate and graduate students' coursework in the *Gendered Memories of the Holocaust* research seminar offered by the Central European University, Hungary, in collaboration with Smith College, US. This seminar is modeled on the pioneering transatlantic research seminar, *Interrogating the Archive*. Launched in Fall 2012 in collaboration with the University of Minnesota, US, *Interrogating the Archive* offered a methodological precedent as far as digital pedagogy is concerned (Dörner and Pető, forthcoming). The *Gendered Memories of the Holocaust* seminar was designed to foster the development of students' critical perspectives of Holocaust narratives that are shaped by practices of memorialization. This approach to the interconnection between "Holocaust-as-history" and "Holocaust-as-memory" was built on the assertion that understanding the Holocaust is inseparable from the ways in which it has been handed down to us (Young 1988). The structure of the course itself was designed, firstly, to develop students' familiarity with theoretical frameworks regarding narratives about Holocaust memorialization (more specifically various ways of gendering the Holocaust), including case studies of several genres of Holocaust representation (memorial sites, memoirs and diaries, family photographs, and video testimonies

archived digitally) and, secondly, to foster students' engagement with these concepts by having to edit their own multimedia narrative with the help of the IWitness program.

Students were first introduced to the VHA through scholarly critiques of digital collections and through a demonstration of the use of the search engine in the archive before being trained in the use of IWitness. The multimedia assignment is the essence of the video pedagogy. Through this assignment, students are introduced to the skills required to edit a short movie using clips of survivor testimonies, after which the students record a one to three minute video, reflecting on their own research and learning process. The assignment was also followed by a separate classroom session dedicated to viewing the participants' video materials as well as engaging in "dialogues of witnessing" (Zembylas 2006, 318).

### *Insights*

Based on our analysis of multimedia projects from twenty-eight students that included 171 selected excerpts from the visual testimonies, the subject matter selected by the students ranged from the historical interrogation of women as historical agents (e.g., female perpetrators, women in resistance movements), specifically gendered experiences (e.g., identity exposure, postwar liberator assault, pregnancy during the Holocaust), and analyses of domestic and family traditions (e.g., narratives of food, concepts of family, home, faith), to the excavation of less often analyzed survivor groups (e.g., lesbian camp inmates, Afro-German experiences of the Holocaust).

We understand these subjects to reflect those narratives that have come to constitute the "mainstream" representations and as we see through a more complex structure, these multimedia narratives could ultimately be transformed to include perspectives on the ethical and epistemological responsibilities of representation and memorialization. Without structural complexity these narratives can seem repetitive and shallow. With-

out the analytical attention to the "overall text of the testimony" (Young 1988, 168), the sheer number of testimonies can become an overwhelming mass of digital information.

On a positive note, in a few cases the students' topical choice demonstrated the potential for constructing space for new narratives (e.g., "Estonian Concentration Camp Scenery: A Gendered Analysis of Fear Geography"; "Liberation: The New Hiding"; "Silencing and the Holocaust"; or "The Afro-German Experiences in the Holocaust"). However, in these cases the novelty of the topic was through the students' high level of digital authority, accompanied by the highest level of sophisticated engagement. In these cases, the theoretical constructs were critiqued and further explored through "creative theorizing" (Benmayor 2008, 195), by using technology to convey symbolic meaning in an artistic visual representation.

The demonstration of one's awareness of one's own agency is the highest level of digital authority that we observed in a video project. This revealed a critical engagement with the medium of the video itself through exploring its potential for conveying symbolic meaning, and indicated a reflective deconstruction of representability, thus contributing to the process of memorialization in an authentic way. The video narrative entitled "Silencing and the Holocaust" explored the topic of silencing from different perspectives, including survivors' self-silencing, the silencing perpetuated by the archival process, as well as the medium of the video itself. Instances of technical failure (e.g., audio or visual failure) were included as frames for the less than four-minute video that contained an abrupt collage of seventeen survivor clips on topics that were organized in the fashion of the VHA, as "testimony sharing willingness/reluctance" and "future message". This video with the speedy sequence of one to two sentence-long clips by survivors draws attention to the threat of de-personalization facing survivor testimonies in the digital archive through the deconstruction of those practices of memorialization that demand

coherency, intimacy, and familiarity of survivor narratives.

Two additional student projects demonstrated a thoughtful inquiry into the challenges of representation and memorialization in multimedia narratives. These two projects contributed to the reflective deconstruction of memorialization in their video narratives by analyzing the silencing in the archive itself through a focus on the small victim category of Afro-Germans and the gender-specific experience of liberator sexual assault.

The video exploring the Afro-German victim category discussed memorialization in multimedia narrative by examining the availability of search terms and the results supplied by the online archive. It also reflected on the respective research questions and assumptions that the student filmmaker voiced in the video narrative. In doing so, the student constructed a video that is both a narrative from Holocaust survivor testimony in IWitness, as well as a self-recorded reflection. This video demonstrates that self-reflection on behalf of the researcher can reveal a combination of emotional and theoretical motivations that contribute to Holocaust memorialization. At the same time it demonstrates the ethical and epistemological responsibilities involved in representing and preserving memories of the past.

The video narrative on the post-liberation experience of sexual violence against female survivors was similarly laden with the notions of ethical and epistemological responsibility. This video included reflection on the student's anger at the tendency for scholarship to silence more difficult narratives. The intention to create space for emerging new narratives was voiced in the video – particularly by extending the analysis of the Holocaust to include what is generally referred to as the aftermath of the event – as well as through the assertion that “post-Holocaust does not mean post violence” especially for female survivors.

#### *Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

By adopting a bottom-up, inductive approach to our empirical data, we were able to re-examine the preliminary analyses of students' multimedia narrative projects that dealt with issues of representation and memorialization in video narratives created from video testimonies of Holocaust survivors. As we argued, students' engagement with narratives of Holocaust historiography and their contribution to memorialization can be located in their decisions regarding topic and structure, their self-positioning as authors/narrators (including the level of digital authority and self-reflectivity), and their editorial and creative (artistic) stance towards the inclusion of other historical materials in their video narrative. A highly developed critical approach towards the theoretical constructs of representability and memorialization that includes attentiveness to ethical and epistemological responsibilities can be identified in projects that emphasize manifestations of the process of silencing in both survivors' testimonies, as well as those processes implemented by the visual archive in the act of collection.

As the title of our contribution to the conference publication indicates, we are interested in our students' (new) ways of seeing, that is, how they explore and multiply mediated representations of the Holocaust, and eventually deconstruct those same representations to also open up space for new narratives. At the same time, as educators we also want to continue to develop our own ways of seeing. It is our responsibility to continually strive for an ever more nuanced analytical perspective of new media narratives, in order that we may further expand our instructional strategies through the purposeful use of video narratives in the university classroom.

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# THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRACING SERVICE DIGITAL COLLECTION

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The International Tracing Service (ITS) collections opened to researchers and became available digitally at locations around the globe starting in 2007. Its holdings had constituted the largest closed archive related to the Holocaust, forced labor, and Nazi persecution. Recently inscribed into the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Memory of the World Register, the availability of ITS materials both digitally and onsite in Bad Arolsen, Germany, has opened important new potential for understanding the Holocaust and other Nazi-era crimes. While utilized for decades principally for tracing purposes, the documents provide opportunities for a better understanding of a broad range of topics related to persecution, incarceration, forced labor, mass murder, displacement, resettlement, and the legacies of those experiences as a result of World War II.<sup>1</sup>

The digitization of this vast collection and its electronic availability at copy-holding institutions has fundamentally transformed the ways we consider and approach ITS. Heretofore unimagined access and new

search tools have revealed the archive's unrealized scholarly possibilities, including the opportunity to peruse the holdings by topic and theme. Decades of collection and organization to facilitate tracing, however, molded the structure of the actual archive and therefore shaped the digital copy in ways that present both benefits and challenges to scholarly research. Understanding the archive's compilation informs an understanding of the power of the collections resulting from digitization.

### *The Case Being Described*

As early as 1943, the Allies compiled useful documents and set up a Tracing Bureau with the British Red Cross in London to begin the work of tracing missing people. As the Allies advanced eastward – as they liberated camps and came across Nazi offices – they continued their collection and brought what they found with them. From London, the Tracing Bureau moved to Versailles and then Frankfurt. Finally, in January 1946, the Allies chose to permanently locate the documents in Bad Arolsen because of its uniquely intact lines of communication in a devastated postwar Germany and its location central to all four zones of occupation.

In the chaos of a reconstructing postwar Europe, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration carried out the principle task of caring for and repatriating millions of non-German refugees from the end of the war until June 30, 1947. In July 1947, the International Refugee Organization took over the task of managing the work

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the history of ITS and the ITS Digital Archive, see <https://www.its-arolsen.org/> and <http://www.ushmm.org/research/competitive-academic-programs/its-academic-programs>.

of tracing individuals and renamed the materials and work in Bad Arolsen the "International Tracing Service" on January 1, 1948. ITS fell under the authority of HICOG (the Allied High Commission for Germany) in April 1951, which took steps to ensure the continued work of ITS as the end of the occupation neared. ITS would continue operations under the management of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as supervised by an international commission; the ICRC took over in 1955 and administered ITS until December 2012 (Shapiro 2009).

After a long and difficult struggle, the ITS collections were finally opened to researchers in November 2007. Until then, the holdings had been used mainly for tracing purposes – one could inquire about the fate of an individual or about oneself, for personal reasons as well as to gain the necessary documentation for reparations applications and compensation. ITS largely indexed the documents by name, date of birth, and place of birth, and all were searchable by utilizing the Central Name Index (CNI). This massive reference card catalog points researchers to documents containing information about specific individuals. Functioning something like an old-fashioned library card catalog, a researcher should find a separate reference card for each occasion that a name appears on documents in ITS holdings. That is, if an individual's name appears on seven different documents in the vast collection, the CNI should contain seven different reference cards, one corresponding to each document. In all, the CNI holds fifty million reference cards representing seventeen-and-a-half million people.

The digitization of the collection began with the CNI in 1998. At that time, the main reason for creating a digital card file was to improve and optimize workflow in answering tracing requests at Bad Arolsen; the conservation of the original paper materials was considered a positive side effect of digitization and not a separate goal. In the digitized version of the CNI, one can type an individual's first name, last name, and birth

date and instantaneously move to the exact section of the CNI in which the desired name appears. This constitutes a significant benefit to tracing work and scholarly research alike, as one must no longer navigate the massive physical card system.

The scanning of the original documents – the documents to which these reference cards point – began in 2000 and continues today. Items scanned include not only the many millions of lists and individual materials useful for tracing purposes, but also millions of pages of documents of general information about various related topics and locations of persecution. These include, among many other things, correspondence and reports of different sorts, all of which were gathered along with all of the other ITS-held materials. These records contain little or no information about specific individuals' fates and ITS deemed them useless for tracing and sorted and indexed them in only minimal ways.

Digitization has opened this treasure trove of documents for analysis. When ITS employees scanned the documents, they were put through Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software, which made them searchable by keyword. With this combination of new digital technologies, previously inaccessible primary source contemporary documents suddenly became available. And not only in Bad Arolsen – each of the eleven member countries of the international commission overseeing ITS and its activities have the opportunity to host a digital copy of the archive. To date, one can peruse the ITS Digital Archive at copy-holding institutions in Germany, the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Poland.<sup>2</sup> Quite simply, what was behind closed doors and completely unreachable is now available in seven locations around the

<sup>2</sup> Digital copies of the ITS Digital Archive are located at ITS in Bad Arolsen, Germany; at the USHMM in Washington, DC; at the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide in London; at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem; at the National Archives of Belgium in Brussels; at the Documentation and Research Centre on the Resistance in Luxembourg; and, most recently, at the Institute of National Memory in Warsaw.



world because of digitization.

### *Insights*

Developments in institutional partnerships between the copyholders of the ITS Digital Archive and new technologies have permitted new possibilities for research, all of which have to do with digital access to the documents. New indexing efforts have enabled new ways to sort data, and digital technology permits search by keyword.

The little indexing that occurred previous to the opening of the archive included only names, dates of birth, and places of birth – things necessary for tracing individuals. Copyholder partner projects that have taken place subsequent to the opening of the archive, however, mean that some subsections have been indexed to permit new ways to sort certain materials. The CM/1 records among the Displaced Persons (DP) document holdings of the ITS Digital Archive represent a good example. The Allies issued Care and Maintenance (or CM/1) forms to refugees to complete for their application for “Displaced Person” status and the assistance that came with it. On these questionnaires, applicants documented their wartime experiences and specified their desires and motivations to emigrate. The ITS Digital Archive holds about 350,000 such forms created in DP camps in Germany, Italy, Austria, England, and Switzerland. The CM/1 collections held at ITS are by no means comprehensive, reflecting the fact that many DP-related documents were destroyed after DPs emigrated or otherwise left the DP system. Nonetheless, the digitization of the entire inventory of ITS-held CM/1 forms took a year and a half to complete.

ITS initially indexed the CM/1 forms by name, date of birth, place of birth, and a filing number. The files created in DP camps in Germany and Italy were later indexed further to include religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, and DP camp names, locations, and dates. This permits different kinds of sorting and searching, for example, for members of rare or less represented religious groups from a specific country, or for those of one gen-

der in a particular Displaced Persons camp. If, for example, one sorted CM/1 forms for American Jewish women in DP camps in Germany (as represented by the CM/1 forms held in ITS), the search results would reveal two forms held in the ITS archive. The possibilities for utilizing such sorting capabilities for certain DP- and postwar-related projects are numerous.

The ability to search by keyword has proven to be another benefit of digitization and, in fact, such an examination would be impossible without it. As ITS staff scan original documents, they also run each through OCR software that converts the scanned text to a computer-readable format. With this version of the data uploaded into the archival software, one can type a word (or words) to be searched among all text related to the documents in the ITS Digital Archive. This includes all of the indexed fields and the textual results of the OCR processing.

Keyword search allows a researcher to examine documents across all of the digital archive’s subsections, permitting a wide range of results from different time periods and sources. It permits researchers to seek and find materials that are original to ITS and held nowhere else, as well as to search copies of resources ITS collected from other archives and institutions for tracing work over the decades. The availability of a range of documentation permits examination and analysis of a wide variety of themes and provides access to little-studied and little-understood topics in Holocaust studies. An inquiry about the so-called brothels that functioned in a number of different concentration and labor camps represents an excellent example.<sup>3</sup>

The Nazis established brothels to ostensibly provide incentive for privileged

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of style and ease of reading, I reluctantly employ the Nazi term “brothel,” although I find the use of terms like “prostitution” and “brothel” with reference to forced sex labor and facilities that housed forced sex laborers problematic. I agree with Christa Schikorra’s assertion that this too was *Zwangsarbeit*. In utilizing this perspective, I embrace the concept that all work in camps was compulsory and that these women “recruited” or who supposedly “volunteered” for such work were actually in *Arbeitskommandos* and thus should be evaluated in the same manner (see Schikorra 2006).

(non-Jewish) male concentration camp prisoners, with the idea that such encouragement would help increase productivity. Little research has been done on this taboo topic,<sup>4</sup> and Holocaust survivor testimony rarely reflects experiences with or awareness of camp brothels. A simple keyword search of the German "Bordell" in the ITS Digital Archive, however, reveals a number of the previously mentioned general historical documents that remain little indexed within the collections and impossible to sort. A keyword search scans through all the OCR processed text of the documents and provides a way of locating them without leafing through millions of pages, one by one.

An example of official Nazi correspondence that refers to the operations and regulation of a camp brothel resides within the section of ITS related to incarceration and persecution. The keyword search hit on the inclusion of the word "Bordell" in the following excerpt of a report of a camp inspection at Auschwitz and nearby sub-camps in late June 1944:

*A performance reward of a brothel visit is allowed, to be paid with vouchers. Only women who worked as prostitutes before they were taken into custody work in the brothel, and they volunteer to do it. (ITS Digital Archive, document 82347470, 1944)*

According to the author, a work-incentive program at the Jawischowitz mine of the Reichswerke Herman Göring included the distribution of vouchers for brothel visits to reward productive male prisoners. Along with cigarettes, groceries, and materials for writing letters, such a coupon could be redeemed for sex with a forced sex laborer. The authors' reference to the women who served as sex slaves in the brothel illustrates an enduring Nazi practice of referring to these

women as "former prostitutes" imprisoned for the same offense, and as "volunteers" for brothel commandos. Neither was true, but this is one of many Nazi-created documents that portray this misleading language. The same keyword search also reveals a scan of an application form from Dachau, which eligible prisoners could complete and submit to be considered for permission to visit the camp brothel. (ITS Digital Archive, document 82104893). Both examples provide us with primary source material from a wide variety of sources and geographic locations.

Postwar reports also mention the word "Bordell" and can be found in the same way. Former prisoners often gave written witness that ITS holds in its collections, and the ITS collections also include transcriptions and translations of immediate postwar survivor testimony. In one postwar report about his experiences in Sachsenhausen, a survivor-writer stressed that prisoners of good character never used the brothel (ITS Digital Archive, document 82152425). In another document, former prisoner and Social Democrat Herr Büge wrote with passion and outrage about the existence of camp brothels in both Dachau and Mauthausen.

*Yes, ladies and gentlemen, a veritable "Puff," [German colloquialism for brothel] where, after obtaining permission to satisfy their desires from the Lagerführer, for a whole 50 Pfennig (in Mauthausen) and for one Mark in Dachau (in Block 31), the prisoners can have a half an hour "in heaven." In Mauthausen, the price later rose to two marks. And the girls? They come from the women's concentration camp Ravensbrück. (ITS Digital Archive, document 82151221)*

Without digitization and the benefits of improved technologies, the quick and effective location of both perpetrator and victim

<sup>4</sup> For more on so-called brothels in Nazi concentration camps, see Sommer 2009; Anderson Hughes 2011; Schikorra 2006.

perspectives on camp brothels in one archive would be impossible.

The keyword search function indeed enables a new and rich possibility for thematic research across the collections, but it has its weaknesses.

For one, it does not account for spelling variations to provide accurate results. It finds words exactly as typed, and thus a clever user will be sure to account not only for spelling variants but also for anticipated misspellings. A search for the Markkleeberg sub-camp of Buchenwald, for example, also entails a search for "Markleeberg", "Markkleeburg", and "Markleben" (the Hungarian pronunciation).

The OCR processing that ITS undertook in scanning documents also has its flaws and presents challenges to the keyword search function. Less legible documents proved less readable also by the software, handwriting does not translate into its digital language, and German characters with umlauts and "ß" confused the computer program. As digitization continues and as OCR and other such technologies advance, though, the OCR-processed text and its readability also progress. ITS digital copyholders receive regular data updates from ITS in Bad Arolsen and more recently scanned documents are better searchable. Thus, the keyword search function improves with each addition of freshly scanned data. A keyword search today yields more and better results than one conducted three years ago.

*Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

Even with these challenges, digitization has created new possibilities for scholars to explore the ITS Archive and to get to know the collections in ways not feasible before. Scholars can sort, survey, and search documents in ways not possible with a tens-of-millions-of-pages paper archive. With these new modern tools, we are only beginning to learn all that is contained within the ITS Archive, but it is now clear that regardless of exact topic or theme, the ITS Digital Archive has become a "must

check" resource, much like the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive. We are just starting to realize the scope and magnitude of the ITS digital collection, the power of which is increasingly understood and harnessed thanks to digitization.

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## **PART 2**

# **2.2 WORKING AGAINST PREJUDICE AND HATE**

# INTRODUCING A NEW SUBJECT IN A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT AMONG STUDENTS OF MILITARY SCIENCES, PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT IN HUNGARY: A CASE STUDY

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Teaching against hate is very important in our society at all levels. In 2014, in cooperation with the Action and Protection Foundation, Kristóf Bodó, a practicing lawyer, and I had the exceptional opportunity to teach a course titled “The Background and Social Consequences of Hate Crimes” at the University of Public Service for students in the Faculty of Military Sciences, Public Administration, and Law Enforcement. The Action and Protection Foundation is a registered civil organization founded in 2012. It seeks to provide a new alternative to the ineffectual legal steps taken against deteriorating standards of public discourse, exclusion, and the ignorance in which anti-Semitism is rooted. Furthermore, the organization fights against atrocities and hate crimes, taking up a strategy of building positive Jewish identity and community self-organization.

This course was a novel one. Firstly, the environment where the course took place, namely among university students who will work in the public sector and law enforcement organizations in the future, presents unique challenges. Secondly, based on an interdisciplinary approach, our curriculum

embraced the sociological, socio-psychological, as well as the legal aspect of hate crimes and hate incidents. Beginning at the macro level, this contribution to the conference publication describes how Hungarian society regards prejudices and hate crimes. This is important when evaluating the need for the course. Next I discuss the uniqueness of the environment where this course took place and the curriculum we developed. Finally, I present our experiences, discuss the challenges we faced during the semester, and highlight their significance for the future of human rights education.

Several sociological surveys and studies prove that Hungarian society is widely affected by prejudices. Let us here just briefly introduce the depth of this phenomenon in Hungary in the case of the most exposed minority groups: the Roma, the Jews, immigrants, and the LGBTQ community.

Prejudices are the strongest against the Roma in Hungary and these anti-Gypsy sentiments are quite visible. This is shown by the fact that in 2011, 60% of the Hungarian population agreed with the statement that “the inclination to criminality is in the blood of Gypsies” and 42% thought that “it is only right that there are still pubs, clubs and discos where Gypsies are not let in” (Bernát et al. 2012). Additionally, in 2013, a survey was conducted, commissioned by the Action and Protection Foundation, on the prevalence of

anti-Semitism. According to this research 15-20% of the Hungarian adult population can be classified as extremely anti-Semitic, 15-18% can be classified as moderately anti-Semitic, and approximately two-thirds of the society is free of anti-Semitic prejudice (Brussels Institute 2014). With respect to attitudes towards immigration, a survey, carried out in 2012, found that 40% of the Hungarian population had anti-immigrant attitudes (Simonvits and Szalai 2013). Lastly, a representative survey, conducted in 2010, showed that 21% of the Hungarian population is extremely homophobic. Another survey, carried out in the same year, revealed that two-thirds of Hungarians would not accept a homosexual person as a close friend and almost half of them would reject them as a neighbor (Takács 2011).

The supply side of this prejudiced thinking was greatly influenced by the emergence and growth of the neo-Nazi Jobbik (the Movement for a Better Hungary) party that was founded in 2003. In the parliamentary elections of 2006, in alliance with the Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP), the Movement for a Better Hungary won only 2.2% of the votes. After this failure, Jobbik broke up the alliance and it started to find its own voice. The growing impact of the party became clear in the 2009 European Parliamentary Elections, where Jobbik won almost 15% of the votes and could send three members to the European Parliament. In the 2010 National Parliamentary Election the party got 17% of the votes. These results unequivocally indicated the enormous growth of the acceptance of radical right-wing thoughts in the Hungarian society. By 2014, the support of Jobbik grew further and the party secured 20% of the votes in the recent national elections.

The demand side of the extreme right-wing can be well captured by the Demand for Right-Wing Extremism (DEREX) index developed by the Political Capital Institute. This index consists of twenty-nine items measuring people's predisposition to far right-wing politics. Since it is based on data from the

European Social Survey, it enables comparison both in time and in space. The proportion of right-wing extremists more than doubled from 10% in 2003 to 21% in 2009, but later decreased to a 12% level in 2013. In an international comparison it can be clearly seen that the Western and the Eastern part of the European Union are sharply separated with the latter having considerably higher proportion of people open to the right-wing ideology. Among the post-socialist EU member states, Hungary took second place after Bulgaria (Political Capital 2010).

#### *The Case Being Described*

According to the definition by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a hate crime is a crime defined by the criminal code, which has been motivated by prejudice against a certain group of people. Hate motivated incidents are also offences based on prejudice against a certain group of people, but not reaching the level of criminal conduct (OSCE/ODIHR 2009b). The fight against hate crimes bears exceptional importance, because they differ from other forms of criminal conduct. These crimes may be considered as messages, thus their effects reach far beyond that of other crimes and can be captured on different levels, that of the individual, the group attacked, and of society as a whole. The victims may suffer a greater psychological and emotional trauma. In the case of these crimes, not "only" the property or physical integrity of victims is endangered, but also their self-respect. These offences question the right of the individual to equality, even to belonging to the society itself. It is important that in such crimes victims are targeted because of some unchangeable characteristic, and for this reason may well feel more defenseless. Victims are often afraid that they may again become victims of further atrocities. Inappropriate handling of such incidents can easily lead to secondary victimization of the targeted person. This type of criminal act also has a strong effect on the group to which the victim belongs. Victims of such crimes are often



interchangeable, because in most cases the attack does not target a certain individual, but rather anyone who is, or perceived to be, a member of the group under attack. Therefore other members of the group also become emotionally involved, and are frightened of becoming the target of such prejudice-motivated crimes. This is especially true for groups that have been exposed to prejudice for a long time. These crimes violate the norm that holds the members of society equal. Inadequate handling of such incidents can have grave consequences for the whole society. It may, on the one hand, encourage the perpetrators, or even others to commit further crimes. On the other hand, it significantly diminishes the cohesive power of society (Barna 2014; Levin and McDevitt 1993; OSCE/ODIHR 2009a, 2009b; Perry 2010).

The Athena Institute registered 121 hate crimes between 2009 and 2012. The number of hate crimes has somewhat decreased in this period: while thirty-six such incidents were registered in 2009, twenty-five were recorded in 2012. In every year most of the crimes were motivated by racism, and overwhelmingly by anti-Gypsy prejudices; however the proportion of these crimes is decreasing somewhat. Meanwhile, crimes motivated by anti-Semitism increased (Athena Institute 2012).

Since May 2013, anti-Semitic hate crimes, as well as hate-motivated incidents, have been monitored by the Action and Protection Foundation (APF). As of April 2014, we have registered fifty-seven such cases. In this period the number of anti-Semitic hate incidents decreased. Sixty-seven percent of all hate crimes and incidents involved hate speech, 18% resulted in damage to property, 9% involved assault, and 7% involved threat. One-third of all registered hate crimes and incidents (eighteen cases) were organized: of which seven were directly connected to Jobbik (Barna 2014).

### *Insights*

As mentioned earlier one of the more novel aspects of this case study was the environment in which the course took place. The National University of Public Service consists of three faculties: Military Science and Officer Training, Public Administration, and Law Enforcement. These students are, on the one hand, very likely to encounter hate crimes in their future careers, especially those serving in the police force. On the other hand, these students can easily get into situations where it can be extremely dangerous if their decisions and opinions are affected by their prejudices. As previously discussed, a high proportion of Hungarian society has prejudices. Therefore, we could hardly assume that all of these students were devoid of those same prejudices. Research also reveals strong prejudices and discrimination in the police force, especially against the Roma. In 2008 and 2009, a group of right-wing extremists committed a series of attacks against Roma people in different villages. They killed six people, including a five-year old boy, and seriously injured several others. Four men were accused by the state of committing the attacks with racist motivation. The trial, which took place in 2012-2013, shed light on the serious faults made by the different actors at all levels, especially in the detection and investigation of the crime. It can be assumed that some of these errors occurred because the actors were biased by prejudices. Taking into account all these aspects, the importance of this course was unquestionable.

As a member of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, I am used to students who are largely open-minded about society. However, in the past ten years, as students have been increasingly exposed to public prejudice and hate crimes, I have observed a growing rate of intolerance. For students of the National University of Public Service the benefits of taking such a course are not so obvious, so it was very important to prove to our students that this course was relevant and important. There were two circumstances that made this task easier. Firstly, the course was an elec-

tive, which would suggest that the students already had some interest in these issues. Secondly, students came from Colleges for Advanced Studies whose members are traditionally more motivated and talented than the average.

*Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

In the process of developing the curriculum we began with three questions: What is the main goal of the course? What are the appropriate means to achieve it? And what kind of impact would we like to have? The primary goal of the course was to introduce students to the social-psychological and sociological background of prejudices and how they are likely to motivate hate crimes. The main emphasis of the course was not on lexical knowledge, but on making the students understand where these crimes come from and what their consequences are. For example, psycho-dramatic techniques were used and personal testimonies were incorporated in the teaching material. Interactivity also played an elemental role during the course. Since we dealt with sensitive topics, there was more emphasis on "feeling", "experiencing", and "sympathizing" rather than on "knowing". The impact we wanted to achieve was the raised awareness of students.

The introductory lecture was very important for establishing a connection amongst the students and was also the best opportunity to incorporate us as educators into the group. Psycho-drama techniques could be well applied for this purpose. The first lesson had outstanding significance from another aspect as well: we had to create the "atmosphere of trust". I am convinced that courses dealing with similar topics should be committed to providing a forum for students to openly talk about their feelings, even if their feelings are tainted by prejudices. If students are humiliated in these situations, the course can create a counter-effect and prejudices can deepen. Everyone who teaches knows that "losing students" can happen in a minute, and that restoring their interest

and co-operation can take much more time. In the first lesson there were tense interactions regarding group dynamics when we were on a knife's edge, but by the end of the lesson we felt that we had established an atmosphere of trust.

In the first lesson, the theory of social identity, stereotypes, and prejudices were introduced and different exercises were used to empirically demonstrate these constructions. Later, factors stimulating prejudice and motives behind hate crimes were addressed, as well as the groups most affected by prejudice. Starting in the second lesson, we combined an approach based on personal contacts with victims of prejudices with the introduction to the legal background of hate crimes. Hungarian criminal legislation identifies two forms of hate crime: violent offences committed against the member of a group and incitement to hatred of a community. Apart from these, the Criminal Code also describes the denial of crimes of the National Socialist and Communist regimes as an offense. Furthermore it bans the distribution and use or public display of the symbols of various autocratic regimes (among them the swastika, the arrow-cross, the five-pointed red star, and the sickle and hammer). In the first part of these lessons, students met young people from the Jewish and the Roma community who experienced hate speech or incitement against their communities, as well as victims of the Holocaust and those of communism.

Participants of the course had the opportunity to talk to these individuals and ask questions. It was interesting to see how much they were affected by the stories of the victims and in many cases they clearly gave voice to their surprise stating that they "did not think that this or that could happen." In the second part of these lessons, Kristóf Bodó introduced the legal background. In this section, emphasis was placed on the understanding of the laws' main points and purposes, and not on the more abstract aspect of legal education. At the end of these lessons, interactive tests were filled out that

helped students decide whether an act was against the law or not, and also to experience that sometimes there is a very fine line between the two. In doing so, students were effectively encouraged to thoughtfully engage with the binary judgement that these actions receive, whilst maintaining the complexity of the intellectual decision-making process.

The course was a very interesting teaching experience. According to the feedback, the course was successful, and the university is planning to offer this seminar as an elective course in their BA programs in the coming academic years.

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# FACING CURRENT ANTI-SEMITISM, RACISM, AND NEO-NAZISM: TALKING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST IN LOCAL INITIATIVES IN EAST GERMANY

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In this contribution to the conference proceedings, I focus on the role of Holocaust commemoration amidst the task of facing and counteracting current anti-Semitism, racism, and neo-Nazism in the democratic civil society of Germany today. I reflect on research and project-work done at the Amadeu Antonio Foundation. The work of the Foundation does not focus on teaching about the Holocaust in schools or universities. It rather tries to activate and support a democratically oriented civil society, which in turn makes central the protection of minorities and criticizes all forms of discrimination and exclusion. A lively and conflict-friendly culture of debate, especially concerning the memory of the Holocaust, is the focus of the following discussion.

### *The Case Being Described*

In our work, two arguments are especially relevant which, at first glance, may seem to be contradictory but in everyday life they coexist side by side. On the one hand, many spaces exist in Germany where people talk about the victims of the Holocaust. But this does not mean that current forms of anti-Semitism are addressed in these same contexts. In other words – and this is not a new perspective – dealing with the past

(*remembering*) does not necessarily imply dealing with the present (*activism*). On the other hand, facing contemporary anti-Semitism, as well as neo-Nazism and racism, is easier if a community engages in differentiated, critical, and personal discussions about the victims of National Socialism, in addition to discussing the perpetrators and their responsibility for the Holocaust.

These arguments are the results of our community-based work, where we support grassroots initiatives and democratic civil society activities that oppose neo-Nazis. Already in the 1970s and 1980s, but especially after the German reunification in 1990, right-wing groups became stronger. Since the fall of the wall, neo-Nazis have killed approximately 184 people in Germany.<sup>1</sup> We do have regions where right-wing comradeships try to establish no-go areas for immigrants, left-wing, homeless, and LGBTI people by threatening and violently attacking them (Wagner and Borstel 2009; Borstel 2011). Especially in some areas in East Germany, neo-Nazi families bring their ideology into mainstream society, for instance into the kindergarten classroom and playground (Eifler and Radvan 2014). Neo-Nazis strategically enter the field of social work. Often right-wingers, especially if they are women, are overlooked and their ideology is not recognized for what it is. One of many reasons for this is that right-wing ideological

<sup>1</sup> For more on the chronicle of death toll caused by right-wing and racist violence, see <http://www.opferfonds-cura.de/zahlen-und-fakten/todesopfer-rechter-ge-walt>.

statements against migrant people are not a marginal problem; racist and anti-Semitic attitudes are widespread and common within the whole of society. Taking this seriously, the work of the Amadeu Antonio Foundation focuses on facing everyday racism and anti-Semitism.

### Insights

Currently, counteracting contemporary anti-Semitism plays a significant role within our work. In the aftermath of 9/11 there was an increase of anti-Semitic attitudes in German society, which is virulent to this day (Radvan 2012). Opinion polls and surveys reveal that historical revisionism, hostility towards Israel, and (secondary) anti-Semitism are widespread in the German population. In a study from the University of Bielefeld, 68% of those asked agree with the statement "I get angry, that Germans even today get confronted with the Holocaust" (Heyder, Iser, and Schmidt 2005, 151). Fifty-one percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement, "What Israel today is doing to the Palestinians is in principal no different from what the Nazis did to the Jews" (Heyder, Iser, and Schmidt 2005, 151). Media discussions and coverage tend to draw upon historic and modified anti-Semitic stereotypes – and this happens much more often and more frankly today than in the 1980s (Rensmann 2004). Anti-Jewish attacks are a big threat in everyday life; people decide not to enter the street while wearing the Magen of David or a kipa. The number of anti-Semitic crimes in 2012 rose more than 70% in Berlin (Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2014), with a nationwide jump of about 41.6% (Powell 2013).

While academic research did address the problem in 2003 and 2004, we missed serious action within civil society. Current forms of anti-Semitism were not seen for what they were, or at least were not counteracted in many cases. Therefore, the Amadeu Antonio Foundation is committed to raising awareness and supporting civil society action against anti-Semitism. With our approaches we publicized two topics: local discourses

about the Holocaust as well as contemporary anti-Semitism. In 2003, we initiated the first supra-regional "Action Weeks against Anti-Semitism", which now takes place every year on November ninth. On this day in 1938, anti-Jewish pogroms took place in Germany, taking one of the first steps towards the Holocaust. Today, communities in both the East and the West also commemorate the victims of the Holocaust on November ninth. The Amadeu Antonio Foundation supported these commemorative initiatives, whilst suggesting that they move beyond commemoration to additionally analyzing current developments of anti-Semitism and racism so as to actively fight these ideologies. In doing so, we did not imply a parallel between the Holocaust and contemporary anti-Semitism,<sup>2</sup> but rather, we wanted to draw attention to the current exclusion of and violence against Jews, the anti-Semitic statements against Israel, and other current forms of the problem – each of which has been virtually absent from politics, public debates, and civil society action. To do so, we addressed the ways grassroots and state-related initiatives commemorate the Holocaust. In doing so, we were able to point towards the differences between East and West Germany, which are connected to their respective political pasts.

During the 1980s, local initiatives that were founded in West Germany began asking questions about what had happened, exactly, during the Holocaust in their regions, cities, and neighborhoods. This public discourse in West Germany had a strong focus on the persecution and extermination of Jews. In this specific context, the German artist Gunter Demnig created the so-called *Stolpersteine*, historical monuments that commemorate victims of the Holocaust. *Stolperstein* means "stumbling block" in German. A *Stolperstein* is a small, cobblestone-sized memorial for an individual victim

<sup>2</sup> According to scientific research as well as to practical experiences there is a danger of instrumentalizing victims of the Holocaust for facing current problems. Scientific debate is discussing ethical questions according to "education after Auschwitz" (Brumlik 1995, 133).

of Nazism. These stumbling stones commemorate individuals – both those who died and those who survived.

During this time, there also emerged a grassroots movement called “Dig where you stand”. People who were part of this movement asked themselves questions about the places where they lived: Who had lived there before? Who was victimized in the Holocaust? Who survived? This movement was connected with the social movement of 1968. Many of the people involved asked their parents what they had done during National Socialism. The conversation finally began in the private realm even though, in many cases, it also stopped there.

These local historical debates focused almost entirely on the victims and started to deal with the perpetrators only much later. Thanks to scientific debates, publications, exhibits, and documentaries, questions about perpetrators are now discussed within specific communities. However, discussions about perpetrators in local historical contexts, that is, in small communities in rural areas, are still scarce.

I would like to highlight that the discussions initiated by these local initiatives in West Germany, even though their scope was limited and narrow, were vital for the development of a democratic civil society. This means that it makes a difference whether such a local historical commemorative culture exists in a community or not. When broaching the issue of current neo-Nazism or anti-Semitism, it is easier to find democratically oriented persons who are interested in these developments in a community that has specifically dealt with the causes and consequences of the Holocaust. For example, in 2007, after the desecration of a Jewish cemetery in a smaller town in West Germany, a group of people quickly organized a demonstration; media reported on the event, educational projects were developed, and a fundraising campaign to rebuild the gravestones was begun in response. Typically, attacks on Jewish cemeteries in East Germany are often not even noticed, much less responded to. Sometimes it is difficult to

find a single individual who feels responsible. I argue that one reason for this lack of responsiveness is that in East Germany we had no commemorative culture that was locally situated and focused on specific victims and perpetrators.

This is not to deny the presence of anti-Semitic attitudes in polls covering West Germany. In fact, anti-Semitic criticism against Israel is widespread, and not only in leftist groups. Of course this needs to be distinguished from non-anti-Semitic criticism of Israel (Heyder, Iser, and Schmidt 2005). That being said, in comparison with East Germany, West Germany has a more robust civil society, in which some groups are responding to current forms of neo-Nazism, and can be approached regarding current anti-Semitism. In my work for the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, I have been able to compare communities and cities in different parts of Germany. The commemorative culture I have described in West Germany has, so far, not existed in the same way in East Germany, where postwar remembrance of the Holocaust was different. There was no substantive grassroots movement, which could have started discussions about local history and responsibility. Besides a few marginalized civil rights activists, no larger contexts for discussions or movements existed that could have identified the same issues that were identified in West Germany. East German memorialization of the Holocaust was ideologically biased; socialist, antifascist ideology focused commemoration mainly on communist resistance fighters, while other victim groups were marginalized or not remembered at all.<sup>3</sup> With its anti-capitalist point of view, the propaganda of the German Democratic Republic portrayed Israel as one of its main enemies. The revisionist media stated that what Israel was doing to the Palestinians was the same as what the SS had done to the Jews – a familiar argument in public opinion polls all over Germany. Israel was demonized, and latent anti-Semitism was widespread.

*Significance for the Future of Holocaust Ed-*

<sup>3</sup> For a summary/bibliography about different forms of anti-Semitism in East Germany, see Radvan 2009.

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In comparison to West Germany, East Germany did not have a specific or concrete remembrance culture for victims of the Holocaust. However, during the last two decades, this process has begun, and we are working to support grassroot initiatives and to ask questions such as: How exactly did the Holocaust begin? Who were the victims and who were the perpetrators?

Due to the specific and very different narratives of commemoration in East and West Germany, it is important for Germans to initiate a self-reflexive dialogue regarding questions of remembrance. To talk about this specifically, we need to face the most recent past and confront the respective roles of anti-Semitism within socialist East Germany and West Germany after 1945. While academic research has begun in these areas, there is still little to no discussion about anti-Semitism in former East Germany in public discourse. To address this absence the Amadeu Antonio Foundation drafted a traveling exhibition about the topic "Anti-Semitism in the German Democratic Republic". The exhibit is called *There was No Such Thing as Anti-Semitism within Our Socialist Country*. The public response was primarily defensive and many people questioned altogether the motivation for bringing up this important topic. Within these discussions we focused on specific stereotypes against Jews and their changing representation throughout history. Additionally, we developed an English exhibition about racism, anti-Semitism, and right-wing extremism in both German states after 1945, and the development of these phenomena after 1989.

In conclusion, we need different approaches to support a lively, local, and individually-focused debate about the Holocaust within civil society. Besides commemoration of different groups of victims, and the personal and critical debate about perpetrators, we need to face current forms of anti-Semitism, as well as forms of anti-Semitism in the recent past. There are different discussions that are vital for a democratic civil society;

talking about historic and current forms of anti-Semitism is one of those vital discussions, and it must continue.

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# THE CASE OF FEINCOST ADAM©: CONFRONTING ANTI-SEMITISM THROUGH CREATIVE MEMORY WORK

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In April 2002, the Jewish Museum Franken in Fürth & Schnaittach (Middle Franconia, Bavaria) mounted FEINKOST ADAM© (DELICATESSEN ADAM©), a satirical exhibition showcasing installations by Berlin-based artist Anna Adam. The show featured thirteen small-scale Jewish mock ritual items that tackled clichés and stereotypes about Jewish religious practices and customs in Germany. In her artist statement, Adam stressed that her exhibit pieces employ absurdity as an artistic tool to broaden and challenge the debate on contemporary Jewish life in post-unification Germany. Adam maintained that public discourse often centered on “pseudo-Hasidic Judaism” while failing to recognize that modern expressions of Judaism are “alive and creative in Germany again” (Adam 2002, n.p.). Yet, FEINKOST ADAM© also skillfully revealed the powerful impact of “philosemitism”, which, according to Gertrude Himmel-farb, “has the effect of debasing Jews, ‘objectifying’ them, making them not subjects in their own right” (Himmelfarb quoted in Winchell 2012, n.p.).

Adam’s provocative commentary on the “philosemitic gaze” was soon to be overshadowed by the heated controversy that culminated in several individual attempts to shut down the exhibition during its three-month run from April to June 2002. Numerous critics of FEINKOST ADAM© misinterpreted Adam’s intent to satirize commonly held mispercep-

tions of Jewish customs and traditions; they accused the artist of spreading antisemitic hatred through the use of Nazi propaganda-like imagery. The controversy soon moved into the political realm prompting the Bavarian Interior Minister, Günther Beckstein, who had not personally visited the exhibition in Fürth himself, to call for the resignation of the museum’s director, Bernhard Purin (*Die Welt* 2002). How could a small-town Jewish exhibition in Bavaria provoke so many contentious public exchanges not just between Jews and Gentiles but also within various Jewish communities across the country? Moreover, why did the artist herself become such a polarizing figure and lightning rod for Jews and non-Jews alike? Could we perhaps hypothesize that the country’s politically enshrined culture of commemoration (*Gedächtniskultur*) contributed to such a divisive climate in the first place? Or, is Adam’s provocative art a reminder that the “negative symbiosis” between Germans and Jews continues to define “the origin of their self-understanding, a kind of opposing commonality – whether they like it or not” (Diner 1986, 9). Once we accept such a hypothesis, FEINKOST ADAM© might offer us valuable insights into how public expressions of philosemitism are inextricably interwoven with recurring forms of antisemitism<sup>1</sup> in present-day Germany (Zick 2010).

<sup>1</sup> When using the term ‘antisemitism,’ I am defining it within a socio-psychological framework: “[Antisemitism] is a devaluation of the group of Jews and their culture or a devaluation of a Jewish person, because she or he is a member of the social category. A common definition refers to anti-Semitism as hostile beliefs – expressed by attitudes, myths, ideology, folklore and imagery, discrimination, and violence – which destroy the worth of Jews and Jewish culture” (Zick 2010, 23).

Anna Adam, whose parents are both Shoah survivors, was born 1963 in Siegen, in North-Rhine-Westphalia. As a former student of Joseph Beuys, Adam employs socially engaged art and the concept of the social sculpture (*Soziale Plastik*) in order to “mold and shape the world in which we live” (Beuys 2004, 9). Adam, who also works as a stage designer and children’s book author, is a member of the Jewish artist group *Meshulash* [*Triangle*], which is based in Berlin. Two of her installations, which later became core pieces of the FEINKOST ADAM© exhibition in Fürth, were for the first time publically featured at the Centrum Judaicum in Berlin in November 2000. There were no known public protests during or after the showing. Two years later, Anna Adam’s installations were on display in the Jewish Museum Franken in Northern Bavaria for the duration of three months. The show attracted over 7000 visitors and prompted over 370 entries in the museum’s guest book, and 150 newspaper articles in Germany alone (*Fürther Nachrichten* 2002); it was a media sensation. The increased influx of visitors was largely the result of a series of escalating public disputes between museum representatives, Jewish community spokespeople, and politicians, who could not agree on whether DELICATESSEN ADAM© was the work of a self-hating Jew or not. The artist herself gained a certain amount of public notoriety and was invited to several prominent talk shows including *Boulevard Bio*. As if to prove her point that Jewish life in Germany is largely ritualized and performative, Anna Adam was offered her own comedy show on cable television; an offer she declined (Adam 2014).

#### *The Case Being Described*

What was considered so offensive about Adam’s conceptual art work? First of all, the exhibition brochures are reminiscent of “Aldi” – the *Trader Joe’s* of Germany – a discount supermarket chain. The brochures sport an official stamp certifying that the laws of kashrut are being rigorously observed. All food and everyday pretend-ritual items fea-

tured in the ADAM’s delicatessen store are guaranteed kosher. Here are four examples (Adam 2014):

#### *Susi Carefree [Susi Sorglos]*

*I’m safe with you! Right? [Bei euch bin ich doch sicher! Oder?]*

Susi Carefree – the little immigrant pig. Susi Carefree has heard that the Jews do not eat pork. And so she has chosen to be a refugee of the Jewish people. DELICATESSEN ADAM thinks that Susi deserves a chance as a mascot and has legally employed her since the year 5761.

[Susi Sorglos - das kleine Immigrantenschwein Susi Sorglos hat einmal gehört, daß Juden kein Schweinefleisch essen. Und so hat sie das jüdische Volk als Zufluchtsstätte gewählt. FEINKOST ADAM findet, Susi hat eine Chance verdient und beschäftigt sie seit dem Jahr 5761 legal als Maskottchen.]

#### *The Jewish Manger [Die jüdische Futterkrippe]*

Find out why Jews always have too much bread in the house! Typically bagels, and at least two varieties of bread at the same time. The Jewish Manger of DELICATESSEN ADAM will initiate you into the secret.

[Finden sie heraus, warum Juden immer zu viel Brot im Hause haben! Typisch sind Bagel und mindestens zwei Brotsorten gleichzeitig. Die jüdische Futterkrippe von FEINKOST ADAM weiht Sie in das Geheimnis ein.]

#### *The Shabbos Nightlife Lamp [Die schabesdike Ausgehlampe]*

The Shabbos nightlife lamp for the modern Jew: easy to use - great in action. Want to still be in the light, but avoid carrying a light and having to turn it on? Developed in the 70s, the Shabbos nightlife lamp became a classic at DELICATESSEN ADAM. A Christian windproof and weatherproof all-hours light is mounted on a little nightlife trolley to be attached to a belt before dark. Should the religious Jew want to leave the house, he

just pulls the light behind him. And there is nothing more to it! DELICATESSEN ADAM© – always a good idea.

[Die schabesdike Ausgehlampe für den modernen Juden. Einfach in der Anwendung – groß in der Wirkung: Um am Schabbat kein Licht tragen zu müssen und dennoch im Hellen zu sein, hat FEINKOST ADAM in den 70iger Jahren die zum Klassiker gewordene schabesdike Ausgehlampe entwickelt. Ein christliches wind- und wetterfestes Stundenlicht wird auf einem Ausgehvägelchen befestigt, das vor Anbruch der Dunkelheit am Gürtel zu befestigen ist. Möchte der religiöse Jude das Haus verlassen, zieht er das Licht einfach hinter sich her. Er hat keine Arbeit mehr damit! FEINKOST ADAM© - immer eine gute Idee.]

Craft Kit “Jewish Life Made Easy” [Bastelset “Jüdischer Alltag leicht gemacht”]

Get on track with Jewish culture! Experience an overnight getaway to another world! Have you always wanted to know how Jews live? Take the 24-hour test! Play the real thing! DELICATESSEN ADAM has developed the exclusive DELICATESSEN ADAM-based craft kit for you. As an environmentally friendly austerity package, this kit includes the most important items and equipment that you need as a 24-Hour-Jew – and of course everything is made from sustainable natural materials. And the best thing is that you decide when the 24 hours finally come to an end.

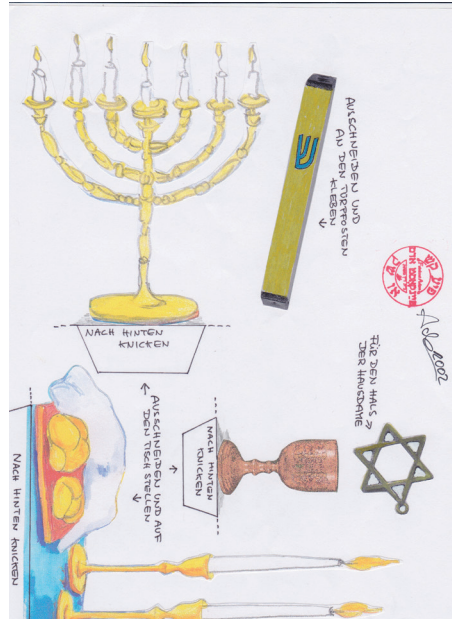


ILLUSTRATION 1. Craft Kit “Jewish Life Made Easy” (original drawing ©Anna Adam).

[Kommen Sie der jüdischen Kultur auf die Spur! Erlebniskurztrip in eine andere Welt! Sie wollten schon immer mal wissen, wie Juden leben? Machen Sie den 24-Stunden-Test! Spielen Sie doch mal den Ernstfall! FEINKOST ADAM hat exklusiv für Sie das FEINKOST ADAM - Basis-Bastelset entwickelt. Als umweltfreundliches Sparpaket enthält es die wichtigsten Ausstattungsgegenstände, die Sie als 24-Stunden-Jude brauchen - und das natürlich aus nachhaltigen Naturrohstoffen.

Und das Schöne ist: Sie bestimmen selbst wann die 24 Stunden wieder zu Ende sind.]

In her *delicatessen* show, Adam ironically commented on the important distinction between satirizing Jewish life in Germany and German perceptions of what Jewish culture and daily religious practices in Germany might consist. Moreover, Adam examined the difficult question of how Jewish life in Germany should be publically represented in the wake of the Shoah: “Wer hat hier das Sagen und

wer darf bestimmen, was jüdische Kultur ist, wer Jude ist und wie man Juden zu präsentieren hat?" [Who among us has the authority and who is allowed to determine what Jewish culture entails, who has the right to say who is a Jew, and how Jews should be represented?] (my translation, Ebers 2002, n.p.). In other words, Anna Adam criticized what she perceived to be the ultimate decision-making power in matters of Jewish interpretation.

### *Insights*

Despite Adam's public statements and a spate of interviews in the German press, her satirical show was continuously misunderstood and misinterpreted by many *Feuilleton* readers. Among FEINKOST ADAM's numerous critics, some had never visited the Jewish museum but felt compelled to take a strong stance against an artist who, in their view, promoted religious intolerance and hatred. Moreover, Adam's attempts at unpacking stereotypes about Jews were largely misconstrued by members of various, mostly Orthodox and conservative Jewish communities across Germany. The conflict intensified when Charlotte Knobloch, president of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Munich and Upper Bavaria*, expressed concerns that Adam's installations evoked anti-semitic images that were widely distributed in Nazi Germany such as in the magazine *Der Stürmer* (*The Stormtrooper*). Together with rabbanim Netanel Wurmser and Joel Berger, Knobloch called for the exhibition to be shut down immediately (Gessler 2002). It was argued that religious Jews would be mortified and offended by Adam's irreverent representations of religious items (Gessler 2002). Rather ironically, Adam was personally defamed by one individual who labeled her a "waschechte Antisemitin" [inveterate / born-and-bred antisemite] and "eine biologische Jüdin und sonst nichts" [a biological Jew and nothing else]. In response, Anna Adam threatened to sue this person for defamation. In the end, the show remained open until its original closing date, and the museum's director retained his position in Fürth.

A perusal of the museum's *Guest Book* reveals that the large majority of entries were positive, appreciating the humor and satire on display. For example, one visitor noted that "a museum is not a sacred space! Ms. Adam's wit is at times biting but by no means antisemitic. Maybe her opponents should finally bother coming here" [Ein Museum ist doch kein sakraler Raum! Frau Adams Witz ist manchmal böse, aber auf keine [sic] Fall antisemitisch. Vielleicht sollten sich die Gegner einmal selbst hierher bemühen]. Another visitor commented that "rarely have prejudices and condemnations been better debunked. The fact that there are narrow minds who are incapable of thinking outside the box is sad but rich in tradition" [selten wurden Vorurteile und Verurteilungen besser entlarvt. Das [sic] es enge Geister gibt, die nicht in der Lage sind, "um die Ecke" zu denken, ist traurig, aber voller Tradition] (quoted in *HaGalil.com* 2002, n.p.).

During the divisive public debate, Anna Adam articulated counterarguments that revealed a deep inter-generational rift between Shoah survivors and their children and grandchildren. Whereas many first-generation Shoah survivors felt personally offended by Anna Adam's art pieces, members of the second-generation embraced the taboo-breaking exhibit as a necessary and even liberating *Stein des Anstosses* [bone of contention], moving the German Jewry into the twenty-first century (Beuthien 2002). DELICATESSEN ADAM became an important and timely *cause célèbre*, a one-woman satire-show/performance that addressed important identity concerns for younger German-based Jews (Pezzei 2002). Most importantly, Anna Adam's provocative art objects provided them with an opportunity to explore contemporary Jewish identities beyond Germany's official and politically instrumentalized culture of commemoration. *Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

For Adam, satire functions as a narrative device that defies and undercuts religious homogenization, Jewish clichés, and stereotyping. At the same time, she considers her work to be an expression of social and political activism spurring changes in people's attitudes toward cultural, ethnic, and religious minorities. Employing caricature, persiflage, and sarcasm, Adam's bold installations blur the boundaries between comic and tragic satire, evoking emotions that can swiftly turn from amusement to anger (Turner 2006).<sup>2</sup> Her artistic creations are light-hearted and disturbing, joyful and deeply unsettling all at once.

However, Adam's highly aestheticized depictions of the "philosemitic gaze" complicate her installation projects even further. As she draws on philosemitism's ambivalent meaning, she reveals it to be a conflicting historical signifier. In the early 1880s, the term "philosemitism" was commonly used to denounce an exaggerated friendliness towards Jews; later incarnations of the term were largely derogatory carrying various degrees of "antisemitic overtones" in public and political discourse (Kinzig 2005). As Adam addresses both modes of representation, shifting the image of the Jew from "victim" to "scapegoat", she creates a disorienting experience for the show's visitors (Beuthien 2002). Anna Adam's unconventional memory work thus challenges us to move beyond traditional, and to some extent even fossilized, forms of Holocaust education. As a German Jew, Adam refuses to perform "Jewishness" and speaks out against those – both within and beyond the Jewish communities – who expect the artist to "behave" according to culturally prescribed norms.

In DELICATESSEN ADAM©, the artist is refracting contemporary images of Jews through complex cultural lenses that have been distorted by prejudice and anti-semitism. Mirko Weber captures this refrac-

tion quite eloquently describing how the ADAM© exhibit conscientiously restages the sacred museum space into a sacred cabaret performance: In such a cabaret space, "there would be much to laugh about [ . . . ], and, for once, Jews and Non-Jews would not face one another as speechless and embarrassed as it is so often the case [in Germany]" (my translation, Weber 2002, n.p.).<sup>3</sup>

DELICATESSEN ADAM© forces us to confront and accept social, cultural, and religious prejudices as difficult learning experiences. As such, Anna Adam's innovative memory work allows us to explore the social persistence of ideas and belief systems that are incompatible with societies that value mutual understanding, acceptance, and political equality.

2 "In emotional terms, the satirist is consumed by an unstable mix of amusement and anger. Sometimes one predominates (producing 'comic' satire), sometimes the other (producing 'tragic' satire), and sometimes they cannot be unraveled" (Turner 2006, n.p.).

3 "Man könnte also über einiges lachen [ . . . ] Juden und Nichtjuden stünden sich nicht ganz so sprachlos und verlegen gegenüber, wie es oft [in Deutschland] der Fall ist" (my translation).

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## **PART 2**

# **2.3 RE-THINKING PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES**



# REMEMBERING RIGHTEOUSNESS: TRANSNATIONAL TOUCHSTONES IN THE INTERNATIONAL CLASSROOM

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What enthused me the most about the *Future of Holocaust Memorialization* working group's inaugural conference in Budapest in 2014 was the moment Facebook informed me that a cover photo had been posted for our page – the same image as appears on the cover of this volume. In an instant, I recognized the positive example and constructive focus it represented: a “subtle yet profound [act] of nonconformity” (Cox 2013) at a time and place – a 1936 ship launching (dis)honored by the presence of the Führer himself – when such behavior could incur a death sentence.

So much Holocaust discourse reiterates the black and white terminology heard in all contexts, be they more or less academic: “perpetrators” and “victims”, “guilty” and “innocent”. Now, however, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, a light is slowly shifting towards those “ordinary people” who refused to support perpetrators and insisted on helping victims. The photograph chosen to represent our ensemble's work portrayed exactly this: defiant solidarity with the downtrodden. This is the new perspective, a highlighting of civic action that can engage subsequent generations for whom the twentieth century is exclusively history. Everyone with even elementary familiarity with the Holocaust knows the name of the Führer, Adolf Hitler; unfortu-

nately, only a spattering of those with even expert knowledge of the Holocaust knows the name of the man who refused to salute, August Landmesser. And yet it is the latter whom we should remember; it is his behavior that we should study as an exemplar.

## *Recognizing Goodness*

Having explored the Shoah for nearly three decades, and having taught a course on *The Holocaust and Its Cultural Meanings* to highly international groups of undergraduate and graduate students in Warsaw and Cracow for over one decade, a peculiarity of our field suddenly became clearer to me. A few years ago, this led me to find a new way to introduce a topic that had always been a segment of my syllabus.

Midway through the semester, at the beginning of class, I ask students to name ten war criminals from World War II. Interesting is that all those identified continue to be only ethnic Germans which, considering how much has been learned over the past seventy years about non-German collaborators and killers, is quite disconcerting. Nevertheless, the surnames encompass the infamous Third Reich “heavyweights”, from Himmler to Mengele, and this exercise has never taken more than a few minutes. In effect, it is so easy that Hitler has occasionally ended up an afterthought as number eleven or twelve on the list.

Next, I ask the students to name ten Yad Vashem-recognized Righteous Among the Nations from World War II. A long silence ensues before someone timidly offers the first name. Thanks to Steven Spielberg,

Oskar Schindler is nearly always that one, but, after a quarter hour, there are rarely even five names on the list. That handful represents those popularized in films, plays, and monuments. Subsequent to *Schindler's List* (1993), the cinematic protagonists now include Irena Sendler<sup>1</sup> documented in Hallmark television's *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (2009), Leopold Socha portrayed in Agnieszka Holland's *In Darkness* (2011), and Jan Karski interviewed by Claude Lanzmann, shown partly in *Shoah* (1986) and fully in *The Karski Report* (2010).

More tangible memorialization does exist, but is easily overlooked. My daily stroll to the Budapest conference site took me past testimony to Raoul Wallenberg. The Swedish diplomat, another Righteous Gentile, is somewhat better known, but appears on today's British Embassy in the form of a relatively small, rather dark, and above eye-level plaque on a building in which he and his colleagues conducted their acts of civil disobedience in 1944. In fact, it was in the seventieth anniversary year that one of my students cautiously mentioned somebody called "Wallenberg" doing something in Hungary, yet (in a class of forty persons) no one could provide more details. Sadly, none of the American participants was able to explain why the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (when a new street address had to be created for it) is located at "One Wallenberg Plaza". For the USHMM – opening nearly fifty years after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising – a decision was made to honor not a Jewish survivor, but precisely a non-Jewish Righteous. Nevertheless, young (as well as old) visitors come and go, drawing no link between Wallenberg and the Shoah.

Although survivor testimony was gathered immediately (some even before the war officially ended), that of the Righteous was in principle overlooked. Victims needed to unleash their traumas; rescuers thought their

deeds so wholly "ordinary" as to preclude articulation. Moreover, as everyone knows, "bad news" is media worthy; good news is no news. Thus unspeakable evil was described, while incredible kindheartedness was not. As pivotal experiments by psychologists<sup>2</sup> have illustrated, in the aftermath of the Shoah, everyone was trying to identify "monsters". In haste to do so, researchers became blind to the "angels".

It was a decade after Yad Vashem was founded and nearly a generation after the war – in 1963 – that official recognition for the Righteous Among the Nations was established. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the total for all countries when Sir Martin Gilbert was writing in 2002, was just over 19,000 (Gilbert 2003, xvi); the figure for 2014 (updated each January) stands at over 25,000 certificates. Some forty years after the founding of the program, Yad Vashem began compiling encyclopedias of the Righteous by country, starting with France and Poland (Gutman and Lazare 2003; Gutman, Bender, and Krakowski, 2004). In 2013 the program saw its fiftieth anniversary in honor of which Yad Vashem set up an onsite as well as online exhibition, aptly entitled *I Am My Brother's Keeper*.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, the literature on these heroes is still scant. The resources listed on the Yad Vashem site number less than twenty. When Gilbert finally tackled the subject, his thick tome – *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust* – includes a subset bibliography specifically on non-Jewish rescuers of Jews; it closes with fifty sources (Gilbert 2003, 463-465). What are we teaching, what are we passing on to the youth, if there are a hundred books on figures such as Himmler, but less than a handful on Sendler?

After the initial attempts to list persons officially recognized by Yad Vashem, the remainder of class time is spent learning about them and about the "altruistic" (as

1 Organizer, among other things, of the rescue of about 2,500 Polish Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto, she was nominated (her candidacy supported by the Israeli government) for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. Former US Vice President Al Gore received it that year for his environmental activism.

2 Among others, see the renowned research of Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo.

3 See "I Am My Brother's Keeper: Marking 50 Years of Honoring Righteous Among the Nations," Yad Vashem, accessed October 1, 2014, <http://yadvashem.org.il/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/index.asp>.

opposed to the “authoritarian”) personality (Oliner and Oliner 1988).

The “homework assignment” at the end of class is to conduct a bit of research and discover a person from one’s own country (or as near as possible to one’s home) who has received this distinction. A few years ago, a student from Croatia<sup>4</sup> enthusiastically reported a week later about a man from her village who had rescued Jews from the Shoah. Though the local population was small and members of his family were known to her, she had never heard about this side of his life. For a Polish-German student struggling with that dual identity, reading about a Righteous from near her birthplace in Poland and another from Germany facilitated a coming-to-terms with a troublesome inheritance.

Of course, some nation states were nearly or wholly uninvolved in the processes of the Shoah, hence, some students (e.g., from Taiwan or Singapore) return with a name from the nearest country (e.g., from China or Vietnam). However, young scholars from countries as different as Turkey and Portugal discover that they also have, for instance, a “Wallenberg” diplomat. Quite meaningfully, students discover that even if their government is not engaged and their country is not occupied, the responsibility and the possibility to intervene remains. There is always a multitude of ways – direct and indirect – in which members of the human race can succor fellow citizens in need.

The Righteous Among the Nations comprise transnational touchstones for Holocaust education. Around the world, students of all ages and instruction levels (with less concern regarding age-appropriate material) can undertake lessons on the Shoah centered on acts of compassion at a time when such behavior is heroic. More significantly – in younger or older democracies, on every continent – pupils can be taught about a citizen’s responsibility for the defense of human

rights by reference to the Righteous in a time of genocide. A path to discussion of oppressive historical facts can be the simultaneous accenting of (to paraphrase Abraham Foxman, a saved child survivor) the goodness, love, and compassion that existed “even in that hell called the Holocaust” (Gilbert 2003, xii).

Yet another investigation into the Third Reich, National Socialism, or Adolf Hitler does not bring us closer to an antidote against genocide; there have been over forty since the end of the Holocaust. Quite likely, a better countermeasure would be a positive (not negative) role model to emulate: how not to stand and salute when everyone else is doing so, how to get into the thick of things when everyone else is an onlooker, how to question authority and break the law when everyone else is obediently “just following orders”.

In the summer of 2014, a group of twelve adult social activists (four each from NGOs in Germany, Russia, and Poland) gathered together for a seminar on “Human Rights Education at Memorial Sites in the Context of Twentieth Century Crimes against Humanity in Europe”, held at Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. My lecture at the end of their first day was “Teaching Anti-Totalitarianism” (an option the group had selected). This time it was in closure that I presented my usual requests: name ten war criminals, ten “Righteous”. As expected of this group, a rapid-fire litany of names was delivered in response to the first call. Startling was that – precisely amidst these NGO activists – only the Polish participants knew what the title “Righteous Among the Nations” signified<sup>5</sup>

5 While the largest “national” number of Righteous is from Poland, this statistic has been misused and exploited recurrently in twenty-first-century discourse about the country’s role in the Shoah. Regarding a similar phenomenon in Hungary, see Randolph L. Braham, “Rescue Operations in Hungary: Myths and Realities,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 32 (2004): 21-57 (especially comments on the opening and closing pages); or, more recently, Ruth Ellen Gruber, “Plan To Open Another Holocaust Museum in Budapest Faces Criticism – From Jews,” *Tablet* 10 January 2014, accessed October 1, 2014, <http://tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/157693/budapest-holocaust-museum>.

4 Worth emphasizing is the specific context of that nation’s ignoble collaboration with the Third Reich as well as the more recent ethnic conflict on its territory in this young woman’s lifetime.

all the Germans and Russians were shocked at their complete illiteracy. "Why don't we know about this?" one of the German activists challenged her colleagues.

### Insights

As we approach the seventieth anniversary of the official end of the Second World War, we draw to a close the second decade of the twenty-first century, and in Central Eastern Europe – on whose "bloodlands" the brunt of the Shoah's murders were committed – we celebrate a quarter of a century of democracy. But another of the German social activists asked if we should not continue to investigate crimes and criminals. Indeed, it was only after authoring an impressive library of books on the Shoah that Martin Gilbert set out to delve into the subject of the Righteous. And as he culled first-hand accounts from surviving Jews, Gilbert received a response cited in his preface; a man wrote in some perturbation: "In my opinion, enough is being written on Christian help to rescue Jews. I feel that the focus is shifting away from the crimes" (Gilbert 2003, xviii). Yet that has been the focal point for over three generations and it has neither served to eliminate nor reduce the commission of crimes against humanity. Again, speaking from the perspective of Central Eastern Europe, how can our previously captive societies transform into civil societies if the models presented in academic sources as well as in the mass media are only negative and ethno- (if not ego-) centric? Perhaps it is time to add a complementary field.

To this end, Samuel Oliner (himself a rescued child survivor) founded the Altruistic Personality and Prosocial Behavior Institute at Humboldt University in Northern California. It is true in retrospect that those who helped stand out from others but, in fact (like the perpetrators and bystanders), they came from all walks of life and were quite "ordinary". What was extraordinary about them was a quality about which the grandmother of another child survivor spoke at war's outbreak: "Better think how fortunate you are.

You will have to seek your friends among decent people only" (Olczak-Ronikier 2005, 264). In retrospect, Joanna Olczak-Ronikier commented: "[My grandmother] did not yet know that in a short while the modest, old-fashioned word 'decency' would change its meaning and start to signify heroism" (Olczak-Ronikier 2005, 264).

To be clear on this, the aim in exploring deeply this sub-discipline of Holocaust studies is not to "offset" outright evil or even the implicit collusion of neutrality and standing by. Such research and knowledge are also not proposed by way of deflecting blame or responsibility for crimes, which most certainly were committed by non-Jews (and not just ethnic Germans and Austrians) in every country against members of their Jewish population. These crimes have been expressly studied, societies have openly discussed their own complicity, and only marginal populists (although sometimes rising briefly to official power) attempt to deny. Here it should be noted that it is not the Righteous themselves, but rather certain historians, politicians, and jingoists who augment the numbers of their "national" righteous, embellish the heroism, and amplify the ranks of the rescued as well. In discourse on the international stage, the Righteous are (ab)used in "one-upmanship" rhetoric and as a "get out of jail free" card when a country is reproached for crimes against humanity committed by its compatriots. Indeed, "there is a potential danger that the myths of rescue, if left unchallenged, may acquire a life of their own, threatening the integrity of the historical record of the Holocaust" (Braham 2004, 57). Furthermore, such manipulation only diminishes the intrepidity and bravery of the Righteous.

Still, the Simon Wiesenthal Center announced *Operation Last Chance* in the year 2000, encouraging countries to bring still-living war criminals to justice, and offering large financial rewards for assistance in this endeavor. In contrast, no such program has been established to find the last of the living Righteous. As noted on the Yad Vashem website:

*It needs to be noted that the numbers of Righteous recognized do not reflect the full extent of help given by non-Jews to Jews during the Holocaust; they are rather based on the material and documentation that was made available to Yad Vashem. Most Righteous were recognized following requests made by the rescued Jews. Sometimes survivors could not overcome the difficulty of grappling with the painful past and didn't come forward; others weren't aware of the program or couldn't apply, especially people who lived behind the Iron Curtain during the years of Communist regime in Eastern Europe; other survivors died before they could make the request. An additional factor is that most cases that are recognized represent successful attempts; the Jews survived and came forward to tell Yad Vashem about them. (Yad Vashem 2014)*

The poignancy, but also the urgency of this is (as with Shoah survivors) that the testimonies – and the opportunity to actually be introduced to and touch such heroes – are literally dying out (the youngest are in their eighties). It has been my privilege to meet such warriors for universal human dignity when they speak to groups on Holocaust pilgrimages. There is no lesson on morality learned more enduringly than one heard directly from a Righteous Among the Nations; their answers to questions posed by listeners illustrate a firm belief in the nobility of each and every human being.

About Raoul Wallenberg's fate we only know that he died imprisoned in the USSR; someone who fought so adamantly against one totalitarian system would cer-

tainly not easily accept another. In Central Eastern Europe, fundamental is the postwar transition from one form of absolutism into the next taking hold in the Soviet sphere of influence. Although their wartime deeds are increasingly entering the annals of world history, few if any scholars note that three of the most renowned Polish Righteous, Zofia Kossak-Szczucka, Władysław Bartoszewski, and Irena Sendler all endured persecution and even prison under the postwar communist regime. Other Righteous such as Czesław Miłosz and Jan Karski could not return to their homeland but agitated in exile. Each of them continued to actively oppose tyranny even when its name was changed; their minds not held captive and their moral backbone unbent, they continued to question authority, to rebel against it, and to refuse to "follow orders".

#### *Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

How facile it always is – especially under relatively peaceful conditions – for individuals, whole groups, and even institutions to succumb to political and peer pressure which justifies (helpless or even pitiless) standing by when perpetrators attack. It is all the more remarkable that these as well as other unsung heroes acted first on behalf of the right for individual Jews to live in peace, and then on behalf of the right for all humans to live free. Undoubtedly similar personages can be found throughout Central Eastern Europe. A closer look into the post-Shoah actions of Righteous Among the Nations in the Soviet Bloc might lead to lessons on how to foster righteous rebellion and civil disobedience wherever and whenever human rights are violated.

To this end, a newer form of Holocaust memorialization is emerging. In 2012 the European Parliament declared the sixth of March as the European Day of Remembrance for the Righteous.<sup>6</sup> Gardens of the

<sup>6</sup> The date commemorates the 2007 death of Moshe Bejski, longterm Chairman of the Commission for the Designation of the Righteous at Yad Vashem and a Schindler's List survivor.

Righteous – honoring all manner of people who have demonstrated a straight and strong backbone – are being opened in various cities around the world.

This started with one in Milan in 2003 which pays tribute (among others) to Hrant Dink who promoted dialogue and reconciliation between Turks and Armenians, to Khaled Abdul Wahab, a Muslim who saved Jewish lives in Tunisia during its occupation, as well as to Vasily Grossman who in the USSR denounced the crimes of both Nazism and communism. In June of 2014, such a public park was opened in Warsaw, its plaques encompassing Marek Edelman – a Polish Jew who fought in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943, then in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, only to continue fighting the communist regime after 1945 – as well as a more recent “Righteous”, the assassinated Russian journalist, Anna Politkovska.

Ultimately, human rights are only guaranteed by other human beings – not by institutions and governments. When things go wrong, societies instantly expect that the UN, the Red Cross, and religious institutions will step in. In fact, the bigger the institution, the slower it will react and the less effective it will be. Most governments will officially and publicly avoid involvement: uncomfortable information will be hushed, an appeasement policy will be applied, and economic prudence will be presented as more reasonable. Yet neutrality in a time of genocide always helps the perpetrator, never helps the victims.

Time and time again, we are reminded that a numerically insignificant populace can bear disproportionately significant power. It is worth recalling words commonly attributed to the anthropologist Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” Sometimes it is the power of one man not saluting at a mass rally. Sometimes it is a small grassroots as-

semblage protesting on a square. Sometimes it is a single family or partisan unit saving the lives of fellow human beings who are in more immediate and imminent danger.<sup>7</sup>

And so it is citizens taking responsibility who, in their everyday social practices assure – in every moment of every day – recognition of and respect for the human dignity of a woman harassed for unveiling or veiling her hair, a man publicly humiliated for the color of his skin or his sexual orientation, or the child bullied in school for his physical or intellectual uniqueness. In fact, one must “exercise” and “practice” such pro-humanity ethics daily lest such qualities as charity and compassion atrophy. By teaching about the Righteous Among the Nations of the World, we demonstrate to fellow human beings how to build, strengthen, and maintain a moral backbone by using it. By casting a bright spotlight on precisely what the Righteous did and how, we illustrate that the impossible is possible.<sup>8</sup> Seemingly minor acts of heroism, rectitude, and integrity in relatively good times lead to continuation in times and places in which the utilization of fundamental human rights could mean death.

Permit me to underscore again that this is not a proposal that we consider complete or turn our backs on the historical research which is unveiling new forms and new cases of explicit or implicit collaboration at all levels of societies across occupied Europe. Neither is this a proposal to cease digging into the hidden profits

7 During World War II, both those who defied an order “to die” (subsequently known as “survivors”) as well as those who defied an order to not facilitate evasion of that collective “death penalty” (subsequently known as the “Righteous”) were in grave danger, the difference lay in the degree of that threat.

8 As an example of a teaching curriculum on this topic, see “Lesson 2.2.1 Rescuers,” *Religion and Ethics – Good and Evil: The Human Spirit in Times of Chaos*, Brisbane Catholic Education, accessed October 1, 2014, <http://extranetportal.bne.catholic.edu.au/re/REC/ReligionEthics/goodandevil/Documents/Section%20Two%20Good%20and%20Evil%20Holocaust%20checked%20and%20edited.pdf>.

made by neutrals and the abetment provided by onlookers. Regardless of the reasons for omission of this lesson heretofore, the point is to provide the next generations with role models to follow whose personal biographies illustrate belief in humanity and strength in morality.

In my very next Holocaust class our Facebook cover photo was projected on the screen. We talked about the sources of strength for that single individual to not do as others who so facilely followed. What better lesson can younger scholars learn than this one: stand strong, stand firm, stand up, and be counted! Counterintuitive as this might sound in Holocaust studies, infectious optimism and unwavering confidence in the power of one (or the few) – a component of the altruistic personality – is what is saving human lives in the present, and what will save humankind in the future.

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# STORIES FROM THE PAST, CREATIVE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FUTURE: INTER-CULTURAL EXCHANGE, THE POSSIBILITY OF INTER-GENERATIONAL COMMUNICATION, AND THE FUTURE OF HOLOCAUST STUDIES

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Holocaust education is at a point of transition. As the events of this particular genocide continue to recede into the past, personal connections to this history are diminishing. Be it relatives or friends whose lives were affected by the Shoah or encounters with first-hand stories of survivors, connections to the Holocaust are transforming as living memory fades. On the one hand, there has been a proliferation in recent years of what Levy and Sznajder call “cosmopolitan memory”, memory that goes beyond ethnic or national boundaries in the age of a globalized popular culture (2002, 101). The Holocaust is increasingly a part of a Western cultural mentality and simultaneously serves as its moral compass (Levy and Sznajder 2002). Yet, on the other hand, we argue that we are losing the personal connection to the Holocaust despite the proliferation of Holocaust memoirs and films, or even the

vast archives of digital testimony and stories that have been collected and disseminated. Given this paradoxical context, what is Holocaust education – or where should Holocaust education be headed – in the future?

Holocaust memorialization takes many different forms: from monuments and memorial sites to memoirs and films, from digital testimony to archival documents and resources. In this contribution to the conference publication, we argue that one important factor in keeping the memory of the Holocaust alive is the ability to bridge the experiences of a new generation of learners and the events of the past so that students are able to personally invest in the learning and memorialization process, particularly in the absence of survivors. In what follows, we describe a case study of a field school program, the *I-witness Field School*,<sup>1</sup> that takes university students from Canada to Europe to study Holocaust memorialization in various Central European countries. In order to build a connection between the course participants and the course material, the program is based on bridging academic scholarship with human emotions and ethical reflections in an attempt to bring about a shared commitment to working to

<sup>1</sup> The *I-witness Field School* has been in existence since its initial planning stages in 2010 and should not be confused with the Visual History archival platform at the USC Shoah Foundation called IWitness.

make the world a better place. In this way, the course is set up to exemplify the model created by the *Facing History and Ourselves* pedagogical triangle (see Figure 1).

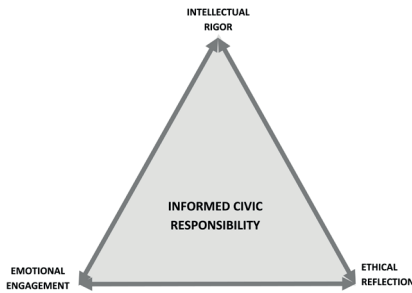


FIGURE 1. Facing History and Ourselves Pedagogical Triangle<sup>2</sup>

However, we also believe that there is another necessary layer involved in making the learning experience a transformative one for the current and future generations of learners. The “I” in *I-witness* is used to emphasize the personal connection the students gain with regards to the history of Holocaust memorialization. The “I” of the course title also highlights three additional aspects that are at the core of the program. These are its inter-generational, intercultural, and introspective components (see Figure 2). In our opinion, these elements help participants realize their own cultural and generational blind spots and recognize various access points into the memorialization process. Moreover participants begin to understand that each culture and generation may possess a language of memorialization that resonates uniquely with that culture and that generation. Holocaust memorialization comes to be understood as a process, and one that must continue to re-define itself in response to the needs of successive generations.

<sup>2</sup> Published with permission from Facing History and Ourselves. For a description of the pedagogical triangle, see: Facing History and Ourselves, Introduction, *Decision-Making in Times of Injustice: A Unit to Supplement Facing History and Ourselves and Human Behavior* (Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves Headquarters, 2009), 7-8.

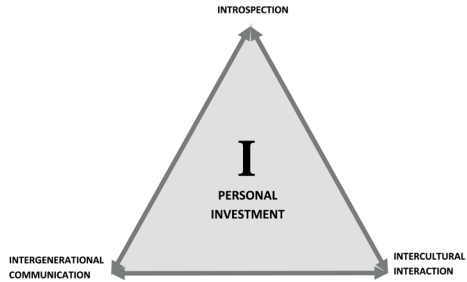


FIGURE 2. The “I” in the *I-witness* Program Triangle

Our description of the *I-witness Field School* in the following sections is just one example of how the inter-generational, inter-cultural, and introspective elements can be incorporated into the study of Holocaust memorialization. It is, of course, not the only example. For the purposes of our contributions to this book, we are not interested in discussing the value of experiential learning on a field school such as this,<sup>3</sup> the impact of Holocaust study tours in terms of participants’ civic engagement,<sup>4</sup> or different ways of designing a Holocaust field school course.<sup>5</sup> Rather, we attempt to explore the possibility within Holocaust education that seeks to facilitate individual investment in the

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the experiential-learning aspects of Holocaust field schools, see Carol L. Clyde, David A. Walker, and Deborah L. Floyd, “An Experiential Learning Program for Holocaust Education,” *NASPA Journal* 42.3 (2005): 326-341; Schlomo Romi and Michal Lev, “Experiential Learning of History through Youth Journeys to Poland: Israeli Youth and the Holocaust,” *Research in Education* 78 (2007): 88-102.

<sup>4</sup> Concerning civic engagement, see Elizabeth Spalding, Todd A. Savage, and Jesus Garcia, “The March of Remembrance and Hope: Teaching and Learning about Diversity and Social Justice through the Holocaust,” *Teachers College Record* 109.6 (2007): 1423-1456; Carol L. Clyde, “Developing Civic Leaders through an Experiential Learning Program for Holocaust Education,” *Prospects* 40.2 (2010): 289-306.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding the design of Holocaust field schools, see Andrew Charlesworth, “Teaching the Holocaust through Landscape Study: The Liverpool Experience,” *Immigrants and Minorities* 13.1 (1994): 65-76; Martin Gilbert, *Holocaust Journey: Travelling in Search of the Past* (New York: Columbia UP, 1997), 142-184; Kay Andrews, “Finding a Place for the Victim: Building a Rationale for Educational Visits to Holocaust-related Sites,” *Teaching History* 141 (December 2010): 42-49.

landscape of the Shoah through the building of personal relationships: both with individuals (whether living or dead) who experienced the Shoah first-hand, as well as with the very act of memorialization.

### *The Case Being Described*

In answer to Andreas Huyssen's notion of "present pasts" the *I-witness Field School* is a four-week program that encourages students to explore how the historical events of the Holocaust are currently negotiated in Central Europe today (Huyssen 2003). The 2014 focus topic, "Exploring the Past – Confronting Racism, Antisemitism, and Homophobia in the Present EU", highlights the interconnection of the present with the past and the past with the present. The *Field School* begins with an intensive one-week of classes at the University of Victoria campus. During this time students are introduced to a wide range of material, including background readings on specific sites, readings that highlight particular controversies surrounding memorial sites, texts dealing with various aspects of memory and memorialization, as well as memoirs and film related to the sites we were to visit or people we were planning to meet.<sup>6</sup>

Here students have the opportunity to encounter amongst themselves a range of interests, concerns, and perspectives on the Holocaust, as they approach the subject from a variety of disciplines. During this time each student provided an initial presentation on a Holocaust memorial that we visited during the trip. Once in Europe, the student responsible for presenting on a particular site would remind the class about the site before we arrived and would lead the class discussion after the site visit. This is the first step towards what is a central developmental aim of the *Field School*: becoming invested in the process of Holocaust memorialization as an agent of history. During the first week on campus students also met and spoke with three local survivors. This experience was then balanced by two additional conversa-

tions with survivors while traveling in Germany. The hope of this interaction is a two-fold personalization of history. Firstly, these encounters give a face to these events whilst reminding students that Jewish life did not end with the Holocaust. Secondly, students have the opportunity to understand the limits of this exchange insofar as each generation may communicate in an experiential language that is unique to them. By doing so, students are presented with a "way into" the Holocaust that both permits and demands their speaking of these events, with their own voice and their own experiential language.

Over the course of the following three weeks abroad, students had the opportunity to study the memorial spaces, monuments, and museums in the context within which they exist and upon which their full meaning is dependent. In addition, the 2014 field school students took part in a series of inter-cultural exchanges by meeting with student groups from the University of Osnabrück in Berlin, Germany, through a joint class session with students from Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland – together with a group training to become Jewish heritage educators –, and finally through a class session with students of Jewish Studies at Ludwig-Maximilian University in Munich, Germany. Amplified by the cultural context in which they took place, these workshops – in addition to the conversations with survivors – worked to merge the inter-generational and the inter-cultural dimensions of the field school to a point of mutual illumination.

In the interests of providing an environment where education and thinking come from the bottom up, from students to students, in order that they may finally invest in this history in a manner which permits really speaking, we encourage introspection and reflection, both on an individual level, as a student group, and finally as members of a community. This is accomplished through multiple forums such as personal journals, a class blog, and daily group processing sessions. In doing so, individual perspectives may remain complex, multifaceted, and dy-

<sup>6</sup> See the Appendix at the end of this paper for the course reading list.

namic. Upon return to Canada, participants share their experiences through formal presentations and discussions at universities, in high schools, and in their local communities in whichever medium they so choose.

### *Insights*

At a time when living memory is fading away, Holocaust educators are pressed to rethink the ways we address the subject of the Shoah. When survivors are no longer able to tell their stories, who will be the new agents of history? How will these stories be told? And in what form will they be memorialized? Over the course of the 2014 field school we have come to understand that these issues are best addressed in an academic environment that emphasizes the importance of inter-generational and inter-cultural exchange whilst fostering an awareness of oneself as a thinking individual through formalized introspection. Emerging at what we understand to be the very limits of the current infrastructure of Holocaust education today, we have come to understand this program as an agent of transition that acknowledges the needs of past generations, whilst grappling with the new and distinct needs of a new generation.

The opportunity to encounter the memorial spaces, monuments, and museums in the context within which they exist creates the conditions in which history is suddenly three dimensional and students are confronted with concrete layers of history – no longer abstracted out of context and inevitably stripped of their complexity. At the same time students are forced to grasp their own positionality while engaging as thinking individuals. This process of critical self-reflection helps to build towards an understanding of what a “cultural context” really means and the consequences of measuring history against the cultural context in which it is studied, as opposed to the cultural context within which the events unfolded.

Students of the 2014 field school were particularly struck by the transformative power of the cultural exchange between stu-

dents of the same generation. Not only did the students become more aware of their own individual biases but also their individual educational backgrounds and the individual historical narratives that inform education. Consequently, as educators, we have come to realize that not often enough do we draw attention to history and education as storytelling. Not often enough do we consider the fact that not every country learns the same history, or is at the same point in dealing with its history.

By focusing on building an environment where education and thinking come from the bottom up, from students to students, in response to the attempt to communicate across experience with survivors, course participants were finally able to take ownership over these encounters with history through memorialization, in a manner which permits really speaking: speaking of the Holocaust, speaking of the very real ways in which the industrialized infrastructure of murder is already woven into the fabric of the world today. Over the course of the field school, students were confronted first and foremost with *perspective*. Stepping outside of their own individual frames of reference, students recognized their ever-changing views and in so doing they were better able to understand the perspective of others. We believe that through this inter-generational and inter-cultural exchange, students are able to move towards a more complete understanding of the complexity of history and, through this experience, grapple with their own responsibility in the present.

### *Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

For those whose knowledge and experience of the Holocaust is rooted in the twentieth century, the twenty-first marks an unprecedented collapse between time and space, the authentic and re-constructed. Students today are inducted into an environment continually under siege, particularly by visual information, manipulated in various ways, and in a variety of mediums.

Consequently, distinctions between what is real and not real are conflated in a kind of hyper-reality, such as the Internet. As such, those distinctions are less codified and the question of authenticity is utterly destabilized, permitting simultaneity and contradiction.

At the same time, Holocaust education insists that if historical accounts are no longer subject to the rules of evidence, it is impossible to safeguard against either the distortion or repetition of the past (Ginzburg 1991). But what indeed becomes of evidence in the face of the reconstruction of the barracks in Auschwitz-Birkenau? What becomes of authenticity in Cracow, where one can look down over the ruins of a forced labor camp without any indication that it is the abandoned film set of Stephen Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993) built outside of the Płaszów memorial site? These questions, raised by the field school, cannot help but destabilize the object-as-evidence based paradigm of Holocaust education, particularly when paired with the idea of the Holocaust as "unspeakable" and fundamentally "unknowable" to any but the survivors (Wiesel 1970; Trezise 2001; Lang 2000).

Therefore, we must ask specifically, precisely at this time when living memory is fading, how to move forward in our discussions authentically in the absence of eye-witnesses. While students of the field school may have had the opportunity to speak with survivors, through those same conversations they were made explicitly aware that these personal exchanges are coming to an end – one of our initial speakers reported that this would be the last time he would be telling his story. At the same time, the stories of all five of these individuals have been memorialized either in books, archival projects, and/or museum exhibits.<sup>7</sup> Yet, it is clear that there is something critical missing in these acts of memorialization. The vitality, dynamism, dis-

tinct personality, and sense of humor – that is to say, the humanity, that each of these individuals possess – is not easily captured in the memorialization process.

This field school attempts to create the conditions wherein students come in contact with these qualities in such a way that they become personally invested and can therefore give meaning to these memorials for future generations. In this sense it has helped us as educators to understand that we must now encourage the attempt to communicate across experience, beginning with the understanding that each generation may discover a language that resonates exclusively with its individual culture and experience. In doing so, Holocaust education takes on a palimpsestic quality that demands that the language of communication and memorialization be revisited by each successive generation, precluding any false sense of closure which can come from any act of memorialization.

<sup>7</sup> There are exhibits in the Jewish Museum in Berlin on the individuals who spoke to us in Germany and the concentration camp survivors who spoke to us before we left all contributed to the "Local Stories of the Holocaust" archival project at the University of Victoria.

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## **PART 2**

# **2.4 LOCAL INITIATIVES IN COMMEMORATING THE HOLOCAUST**



# SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE PAST: DIGGING FOR INFORMATION AND GRASSROOTS MEMORIALIZATION

## BARBARA KINTAERT

Local History Initiative Member

Vienna, Austria

This chapter deals with a small local history initiative that started in 2003 in a small street in Vienna's ninth district, *Alsergrund*. It was started by one of us, Barbara Kintaert, in January 2003 – initially without any theoretical context and academic framework in mind, but with a lot of presentiment and curiosity. By the autumn of 2003, almost a dozen neighbors, friends, and interested people had joined Kintaert in the quest for the past regarding the house *Servitengasse 6* and later all the houses on the street. The initiative continued to grow and historical, sociological, and psychoanalytical questions were discussed.<sup>1</sup>

In 2005 and 2011 two memorial plaques and in 2008 a memorial monument were unveiled; in 2006 a film about our grassroots project was presented (Dörr and Steinmetz); and in 2007 our group published a book about our research (Johler and Fritsche). In 2007 Barbara Sauer and Birgit Johler presented our project and our film in Paris, France (2007-06-22, 3ième Festival des Cultures Juives. Mairie du 3ième, 16h), Peter Koppe and Barbara Kintaert discussed our project in the spring of 2007 in Tel-Aviv at the *Club der Österreicher*, and in the autumn of 2008 Barbara Sauer and Birgit Johler showed our film at the Cinethek in Jerusalem and presented our project at Yad Vashem,

the Holocaust History Museum in Israel. A number of newspaper articles were written about *Servitengasse 1938* (see appendix). In 2010 and 2012 we launched two exhibitions in Vienna: the first in the Galerie Fortuna about our oral history interviews with survivors and the second in the Volkshochschule Galileigasse about our research. In March 2013 Barbara Kintaert presented the project in Liberec, Czech Republic, at the conference of "Living Memory / Ziva Pamet", and in April 2013 our project was presented in London at the Austrian Cultural Forum (ACF) by Joanna White, Peter Koppe, Birgit Johler, Barbara Sauer, Katharina Kober, and Ulrike Taus. In 2014 Barbara Kintaert also presented the project at the Central European University in Budapest. In 2011 and 2014, Canadian students from the University of Victoria's *I-witness Field School* visited numerous European Holocaust memorial sites and were impressed and moved by the *Servitengasse 1938* project, considering it very special and rather unlike the other sites they had seen.

### *Case Being Described*

In the summer of 1999 Barbara Kintaert began privately researching the fate of the Jewish relatives of her father-in-law. They had all once lived in Vienna's second district, the district with the highest percentage of Jewish inhabitants in Vienna. Six relatives had been deported and murdered and eight more relatives had been able to emigrate, but had lost all their possessions beforehand. They never came back to Vienna after World War II. They preferred to stay in Palestine/Eretz Israel or in Sweden, in England, or

<sup>1</sup> For more information about the *Servitengasse 1938* project, see <http://www.servitengasse1938.at>.

in the US respectively. With this already in mind, two books added to Kintaert's feeling and presentiment that "one must also dig where one stands". The first book mentioned is called *Dora Bruder* by Patrick Modiano (1999), who won the Nobel prize for literature in 2014. The second book is called *First Words* by Rosetta Loy (2000). Both books deal with the research of their respective authors, who had wanted to find out what had happened to persons or families in their neighborhoods who had disappeared during WWII, i.e., from Paris and Rome respectively. These two small pocket books had a deep and lasting impact on Barbara Kintaert and are highly recommended reading.

Just as each city, town, or village has its history, each street, house, and each apartment has a history of its own.



ILLUSTRATION 1. Servitengasse 6 and neighboring houses built in the Gründerzeit style around the beginning of the twentieth century. © BK 2005.

IX. Servitengasse — „Lehmann

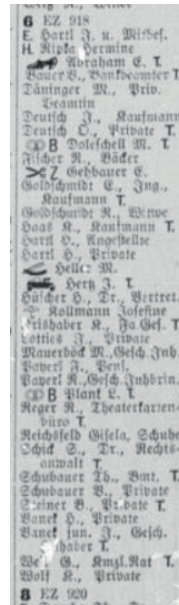


ILLUSTRATION 2 and 3. Adressbuch Lehmann from the years 1936 and 1941.

In the Austrian National Library and in the Vienna City Library one can still find the official address books, directories, and registers of Vienna in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Vienna these address books, *Adressbuch Lehmann*,<sup>2</sup> were not only organized alphabetically (just like common telephone books today) but in addition they were also edited in a “geographical” version. There was once one volume for each district of Vienna and within each of these volumes the streets of that particular district appeared in alphabetical order; within these streets, the houses are listed in numerical order. Then, for each house, e.g., *Servitengasse 6*, the names of its owner, its property manager, and all its inhabitants are listed in alphabetical by their family names. The letter “T” next to a name means that this person had a telephone. The shopkeepers however are listed in another chapter of the *Adressbuch Lehmann* but are also easy to find. The same is likely to be true for the address books, directories, or registers of other towns in Europe too. Any European citizen who is interested in the history of his or her house or street will surely find a way to discover its local history.

In January 2003, after researching the inhabitants of her relatives’ houses in Vienna’s second district, Barbara Kintaert looked up all the inhabitants of *Servitengasse 6* in the ninth district, where she lives. Then she compared the names of those tenants, who lived in the house in 1936 with those who lived in the same house in 1941. It was soon clear that half of the former inhabitants of 1936 had disappeared by 1941. Where had the families Abraham, Deutsch, Goldschmidt, Hertz, Hüscher, Krishaber, Reichsfeld, Dr. Schick, Schubauer, Steiner, and Weil gone to? And watchmaker Lichtmann? Had they just moved to other places? Had they died of old age? Or had they disappeared because of the Second World War? Only one tenant was listed in 1936 with her first name: Mrs. Gisela Reichsfeld (usually only the first

letter of the first name was listed, making research more difficult).

In April and May 2003, while working and researching at the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance in Vienna (DÖW), and still with the name of Gisela Reichsfeld in mind, Barbara Kintaert took a look at the *Totenbuch Theresienstadt* (Steinhauser 1987). It was a shock finding the name of Gisela Reichsfeld among the list of deported persons from Vienna to Theresienstadt in this book. Now it was clear that Mrs. Gisela Reichsfeld, née Goldberger, born in 1865, had been deported to Theresienstadt at the age of seventy-seven in 1942 and had died there from disease and hunger in 1943 (Terezin Database of Victims) and that a memorial plaque or at least a so-called *Stolperstein* [stumbling stone] would be appropriate to commemorate her sufferings.



ILLUSTRATION 4. Gisela Reichsfeld, née Goldberger at age 53. © ÖNB-Bildarchiv.

This is how Gisela Reichsfeld looked in 1918 (see Illustration 4). Her picture was waiting to be discovered at the *Bildarchiv* of the Austrian National Library.

<sup>2</sup> A few years ago, the *Adressbuch Lehmann* was also made accessible online via the Vienna City Library: <http://www.wienbibliothek.at/english/index.html>.

With the help of Barbara Kintaert's neighbors, Alix Paulus, a psychoanalyst, and Ursula Lindenberg, an Agenda 21 member, but also with the help of Birgit Johler, Michael Landesmann, Alex Kubik, and many more, the *Servitengasse* initiative grew and started to work more systematically. Birgit Johler was hired to research all the other inhabitants of the house *Servitengasse 6*, and twenty-six more victims were discovered. On September 20, 2005, the memorial plaque was unveiled for Mrs. Gisela Reichsfeld and for all the other Jewish tenants of this one apartment house. Half of the twenty-eight apartments and two of the five shops had belonged to Jewish families or individuals – twenty-seven people in total. They had all been expelled by the house owners, Mrs. Hermine Hartl and her son Dr. Hubert Hartl (who had become a member of the NSDAP) at the very beginning of the Nazi era in Austria. His descendants, who still own the house today, unfortunately did not agree with us that a memorial plaque should be put on the wall of the building. In the end, the plaque had to be erected on public ground, twenty centimeters away from the wall on the sidewalk – but this way the plaque is even more visible and the names of the twenty-seven victims can be read by every person passing by. In order to collect sufficient funding for the plaque, Dr. Almut Weiss organized a charity concert for us at the *Jüdisches Museum* on the *Dorotheergasse 11* on March 29, 2005, and we also received private and official donations.

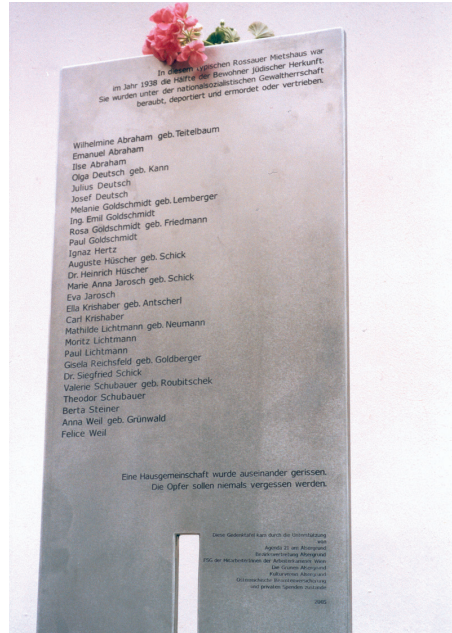


ILLUSTRATION 5. Memorial plaque, ©BK 2005.

In the summer of 2004 Barbara Kintaert was able to contact one of the survivors, Paul Lichtman (born 1921), whose parents had once had a jewellery and watchmaking store in *Servitengasse 6*. He had been able to emigrate to the US at the end of 1938, while his parents had to flee to Shanghai, China. For Paul Lichtman and his son Barry it was a great pleasure and a very emotional experience to come to Vienna after so many decades and to be able to unveil the memorial plaque on September 20, 2005. They had contacted the Jewish Welcome Service of Vienna (JWS), which invites Holocaust survivors who the Nazis had forced out of Vienna, in order to be able to visit Vienna. To Paul's surprise, a life-size picture of his parents' store from 1937 was printed and glued onto the windows of the current shop. This life-size poster was later donated to the local district museum *Bezirksmuseum Alsergrund*. He donated many copies of documents,

photos, and letters from his parents before WWII to Barbara Kintaert, including Moritz Lichtmann's diary about his horrifying experiences of the November 1938 pogrom and his arrest and abuse by the Gestapo.



ILLUSTRATION 6. Paul and Barry Lichtman next to Moritz and Mathilde Lichtmann. © BK 2005.

Later Kintaert also contacted another survivor, Charles Kurt, born in Vienna in 1926 as Carl Heinz Goldschmidt. His (divorced) father and grandmother had once lived in her apartment and they both had been deported and murdered. It was a very moving experience in 2006 to have Charles Kurt, who now lives in the US with his wife, visit and to hear from him how his life had been in Vienna before the Second World War. He donated copies of postcards and letters he received from his father, Paul Goldschmidt, to Barbara Kintaert.

### Insights

It should be noted that fifteen of twenty-seven of the Jewish inhabitants of this single address, *Servitengasse 6*, were forced by the Nazis to move to thirteen different addresses across Vienna into so-called *Sammelmwohnungen*, or communal apartments, before they were sent to *Sammellager*, or collection camps. From there most of them were then deported to ghettos and concentration camps. Mrs. Gisela Reichsfeld had to move three times before she was deported to Theresienstadt.





ILLUSTRATION 7. Map of Vienna. © BK 2005.

Illustrations seven and eight portray the persecution of Jewish residents of *Servitengasse 6* by the Nazis. The same is true for the other houses of the street as well. Routes of forced expulsion cover – like spider webs – the whole city and the whole continent and indeed almost the whole world.



ILLUSTRATION 8. Map of Europe. © BK 2005.

Researching Mrs. Gisela Reichsfeld's fate led to an interest in uncovering all the stories of the former Jewish inhabitants of the *Servitengasse 6* building. After this research was finished, our non-profit-organization was founded in 2006, the current chairperson being Peter Koppe, and the decision was made to also start researching the history of the whole street, i.e., twenty-three more apartment houses. A book on the research and history of the street was published by Birgit Jöhler and Maria Fritsche in 2007. Its English translation is now partly finished and we are looking for a publisher.

Statistically speaking, *Servitengasse 6* and also the entire street are representative of the fate of the persecuted Austrian Jews in general. One third of its Jewish inhabitants was deported and murdered; one third of them managed to flee into exile legally with visas, saving their lives but having to leave behind all their belongings; and one third of the inhabitants of *Servitengasse* were no longer traceable after the end of the war. There is evidence that some of them managed to flee to neighboring countries across the so-called green borders illegally, but several of them were arrested by the Nazis later and were also deported and murdered in the Holocaust.

Of little less than 700 inhabitants from *Servitengasse* (which also had 111 shopkeepers or small company owners, sixty-one of them being Jewish) more than 55%, that is, 377 persons, were of Jewish descent in early 1938 and eighty-five or more Jewish persons had to move from *Servitengasse* into the *Sammelwohnungen*, or communal apartments, previously mentioned. They all had "disappeared" without leaving any trace, and nobody had asked about their fates for so many decades. The keys to their apartments and shops had been taken away from them, their names had been substituted by anonymous numbers on deportation lists or had been forgotten after their emigration. Not a single survivor ever returned to *Servitengasse* after the war. Our research initiative wanted to give them back their names so that they could symbolically return to their place among us.

In 2006-2007, a competition among the students of Vienna's University of Applied Arts led to the memorial "Keys Against Forgetting". A glass case placed into the ground at the intersection of *Servitengasse* and *Grünentorgasse*<sup>3</sup> displays 462 keys with nametags attached to them. The winning artist, Julia Schulz, wanted our Holocaust memorial to look like an archaeological excavation. The old keys themselves were donated by and collected from old persons

<sup>3</sup> For another story about the *Grünentorgasse* near *Servitengasse*, see Henry Gleisner's autobiography (2000).



from the neighborhood, some of the keys are 120 years old. Private and official funding and donations as well as financial and bureaucratic support from the Green Party and the Social Democratic Party of Vienna's ninth district made the memorial and its unveiling ceremony possible.

The memorial was unveiled on April 8, 2008 by four survivors, invited again by the JWS: Charles Kurt, Lilly Blau Capek, Felice Bruckner Schragar, and Walter B. Feiden. They all came from the US to Vienna.



ILLUSTRATION 9 and 10. *Servitengasse* memorial "Keys Against Forgetting".  
© BK 2008-2014.

#### *Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

The *Servitengasse 1938* group is currently continuing with its research, trying to find out more about the Jewish organizations, religious or laic, that once were spread across Vienna's ninth district. Barbara Sauer, Katharina Kober, Ulrike Tauss, and Joanna

White are working on this research together with Birgit Johler, and they are planning another publication in the future. They have also started giving evening courses in March 2009 at the local adult education college, Volkshochschule Galileigasse, on how to research the history of one's own apartment building, and they put a manual called "Recherche-Leitfaden" on our website (<http://www.servitengasse1938.at>) that can be downloaded. In 2009 another local education college, Volkshochschule Hofwiesengasse, invited us to write a paper in their magazine *Spurensuche*.

In 2014, the series *Contemporary Austrian Studies* published by the University of New Orleans and by the University of Innsbruck, invited our organization to write about our *Servitengasse 1938* project (see Johler et al. 2014). In this essay, Birgit Johler, Katharina Kober, Barbara Sauer, Ulrike Tauss, and Joanna White discuss the theoretical context and academic framework that grew and slowly developed parallel to our findings in the archives. The authors highlight aspects of civic participation, networking, and learning-by-doing that the research team acquired – and is still acquiring. The sense of social responsibility developed in projects such as these can strengthen democracy and help reduce indifference and disregard towards injustice, whether past or present. The submission mentions, among other things, that Claude Lanzmann briefly visited the *Servitengasse* memorial "Keys Against Forgetting" in his film about Benjamin Murelstein *Der letzte der Ungerechten* (*Le dernier des injustes*) in 2013.

In June 2014 Barbara Kintaert presented the project *Servitengasse 1938* at the Central European University conference "On the Future of Holocaust Memorialization". On October 18, 2014, Barbara Kintaert was invited to Karen Frostig's "The Vienna Project" closing event to read from the letters of Paul Goldschmidt and from the diary of Moritz Lichtmann at the Austrian National Library.



The success of this project shows that anyone who is curious, passionate, and determined can initiate grassroots investigations into their local history, without being driven by or laden with academic or institutional authority. The true insights into the relationship between history and the present unfailingly come from “digging where you stand” and not being afraid to get your hands dirty. The *Servitengasse 1938* memorialization group continues to meet regularly, nearly every other month, and writes a protocol about it every time, and the group continues to come up with new ideas about what to research next. We hope that we will inspire similar projects and that others will start doing the same type of research in their own neighborhoods.

The most rewarding moments are those when survivors or their descendants tell you their personal stories. These stories need to come back to the place where they happened or began, and they need to be known there.

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# MEMORY WALK: HISTORY THROUGH MONUMENTS

## **BORBÁLA KLACSMANN**

Anne Frank House  
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The Anne Frank House opened its gate to visitors on May 3, 1960, and soon became one of the most famous museums of the Netherlands, with around a million visitors annually (Anne Frank House 2014). However, it does not merely function as a museum. Otto Frank (father of Anne) believed that youth should have the opportunity for dialogue and cultural exchange in order to contribute towards a better future. With this idea in mind the Anne Frank House opened its International Youth Centre in 1961, and since then it has helped the Anne Frank House in preventing the spread of anti-Semitism, racism, discrimination, and prejudice by introducing youth to topics such as human rights, multiculturalism, and social diversity (Metselaar 1999).

The aim of this paper is to present one of the educational programs of the Anne Frank House to the wider public in order to call their attention to its methodology and how it can be adapted to a certain national context. By providing a theoretical as well as a methodological description, the reader will gain an insight into a good practice that might be useful for future Holocaust-related teaching methodologies.

Memory Walk is an “innovative educational film workshop encouraging critical reflection on remembrance” (Boerhout 2013, 1) and was developed by Laura Boerhout, Barry van Driel, and Aaron Peterer, employees of the Anne Frank House. The original idea was to make the participants of the Youth in Action program held at the Anne Frank House familiar with the history of Amsterdam through its monuments.

The success of this event led to the first “Monument Walk” in Berlin where the participants made short films about local monuments, which were then displayed at the opening of a new Anne Frank exhibition in 2012. Following the success of the first “Monument Walk”, further workshops were developed and Memory Walk became part of the curriculum of the Anne Frank House (Boerhout and Driel 2013).

The main objective of the workshop is to familiarize the participants with monuments in their own environment, while focusing on the relevance of these monuments for contemporary society and the concept of memorialization, i.e., the process of preserving memories of certain historical events and personalities. Memory Walk focuses mainly on contested histories in the twentieth century by investigating the messages, symbolism, and significance of certain contemporary monuments. The participants are asked to choose a selection of monuments, research these monuments, film interviews with ordinary citizens who pass by the monuments, and eventually use those interviews to make short films that combine an introduction to each monument’s historical background from the interviewees’ perspective.

The workshop draws attention to discrimination and inequalities in the memorialization process by providing insights into historical narratives, representations of the past, and the many, sometimes opposing, interpretations of the monuments’ meaning and the messages they are supposed to convey. The students are inspired to become active citizens as they inevitably end up confronting hidden histories, i.e., those people or groups who are rendered silent through omission from official narratives. Students eventually recognize that the memorialization process is closely connected

to power relations and individual interests. In confronting these issues, participants are urged to accept the responsibility to ensure an open and inclusive representation of the past, as well as the specific roles they might play in the memorialization process (Boerhout 2013). They are urged to find their own interpretations, and through exposure to other narratives they learn to engage and to embrace the diversity of perspectives in their communities.

In addition to gaining the theoretical framework, workshop participants learn the rudiments of conducting historical research, formulating logical arguments, as well as filming and editing – concrete skills that they can profitably apply in other areas of study or professional careers. Throughout the filming, a cooperative atmosphere is encouraged to facilitate teamwork and discussion in small groups.

Memory Walk operates with the relatively new method of employing authentic scenes and combining them with the usage of digital media. Visiting authentic locations (such as former concentration camps, memorial sites, monuments, and museums) has become an integral part of Holocaust education, together with the enactment of Holocaust remembrance days in many countries (IHRA 2014). Since then, complex educational guidelines have been developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and by other international organizations whose missions involve Holocaust and/or human rights education – such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the United Nations (IHRA 2014).

Memory-focused education is largely a consequence of Pierre Nora's groundbreaking work, *Les lieux de mémoire* (*Realms of Memory*, 1996). The core of Nora's ideas concerning *lieux de mémoire* – namely that the sites of memory represent continuity and a certain narrative of history – is complemented by the reality that these sites are constantly interacting with memory (Nora 1996). Since constructed monuments have a symbolic meaning that must first be deci-

phered, the comprehension of events that are commemorated by the monument becomes more difficult (Snowman 2005). At the same time, the symbolic meaning of these monuments is subject to multiple narratives. Therefore, monuments have the capacity to change the interpretation of a certain historical event as well as to generate new interpretations, both of which ironically stand in contrast to their objective to stop time (Nora 1996).

Collective memory not only shapes the form and interpretation of a memorial space, but also the approach and personal memories of the members of the community that erected the monument or memorial. Even though monuments represent memories carved in stone, these memories are always complex and contested due to the diversity of their interpretations. This complex nature makes memorials extremely appropriate for educational purposes.

#### *The Case Being Described*

In June 2014 the first Hungarian Memory Walk workshop was organized by three Hungarian project coordinators of the Anne Frank House in Budapest: Fanni Hédi, Ildikó Laszák, and Borbála Klacsmann. This workshop largely followed the pattern of the original concept, according to which a Memory Walk consists of one day spent on the theme of memorialization, one day spent touring relevant monuments, and two days spent on filming, editing, and discussion (Boerhout 2013). The fundamental structure of a Memory Walk remains the same and educators may apply this structure to the relevant national context.

Given the particular Hungarian situation, the main aim of the Hungarian Memory Walk was to address the controversial interpretations of historical events committed in the previous century. The collapse of communism revived the debate about turning points of twentieth-century Hungarian history, such as the Treaty of Trianon, the world wars, the Holocaust, and so forth. Historians, politicians, artists, and other public figures

greatly influence public understanding of these events. For instance, radical right-wing politicians relativize the Holocaust in their public talks, and some outright deny it. It is therefore essential for young people to be able to find their way amongst the numerous viewpoints, and to be able to reflect and form their own opinion.

The originality of Memory Walk lies in its teaching methodology that involves exposure to monuments, the use of digital media, and a “learning by doing” attitude, the combination of which constitutes the pedagogical method of the Anne Frank House. Consequently, Memory Walk places unique demands on both educators and students, both of whom are actively involved in the transferring of knowledge and the empowerment of youth.

The eleven students who participated in the Hungarian Memory Walk were selected on the basis of a preliminary assignment consisting of a short essay about their favorite monument and its role in everyday life. The essays were then later used as a basis for reflection, inspiring the students to think further about their chosen memorials.

The theoretical-historical background of the topic was provided by Andrea Pető (Central European University); she spoke about memorialization, collective memory, and representation. During this lecture the most important theories, concepts, and expressions of memorialization were introduced and the participants had to analyze their chosen monuments. Comprehension of the historical background was enriched through source analysis. By working with newspaper articles, official documents, diaries, recollections, and newsreels, insight in the Holocaust remained multifaceted. These educational units introduced students to the reality that every historical event may be analyzed through the multiple perspectives of different groups in possession of competing memories (Eckmann 2010). Gwen Jones also spoke of the Open Society Archive (OSA) that initiated the “Yellow Star Houses” project, providing the students with further

historical background.

Finally, the students learned how to “read” monuments. By working to decipher the symbolic meaning of monuments from all around the world, students learned how to reflect on the representation of the past and to discover the history that individual monuments commemorate. The analysis also included questions on the building of the monument, its function, and reception. Students developed the ability to critically think about how a monument is used or not used, and which narratives are espoused or silenced, and they later applied these skills to their individual film projects.

Before filming began, students were asked to design a monument, a task through which they came to understand not only the difficulty in constructing complex symbols, but also the responsibility of the sculptor in the memorialization process (Boerhout, Kreyderman, and Voitenko 2014).

The program also included “monument tours” in Budapest, where students paid a visit to sculptures, memorials, and significant sites in the Jewish quarter. During the interactive tours, educators would challenge the participants with questions about history, building on previously acquired knowledge and urging them to reflect on the significance, function, and meaning of these sites (Boerhout 2013).

### *Insights*

Teaching about monuments raises many specific questions: On what basis does the educator choose the memorial site? What kind of commentary or context is provided, since authentic sites do not always speak for themselves? What are the limits of interpretation? How do we deal with the preconceptions of the students (Heyl 2014)? And how do we address the topic of memorialization – and the afterlife of the monument? Each of these questions emerged during the planning of the workshop and helped to define the focus and structure of the Memory Walk.

The short films shot by the students were modeled on the two-part structure

of other Memory Walk films: the first part consists of the historical background of the given monument, and the second part consists of excerpts from interviews made with ordinary people expressing their personal opinions on the monument. In order to compile such films, the participants conducted further research on their chosen monuments and carefully determined which questions to ask during the interviews. They also acquired filming and interviewing skills through “learning by doing”, that is to say by going out on the street and interacting with people. Students were surprised when, due to the chosen topics, many interviewees did not allow their face or name to appear in the film, and some people did not want to talk at all.

#### *Significance for the Future of Holocaust Memorialization*

The Hungarian Memory Walk is one of a series of Memory Walk workshops organized in other countries (Germany, Italy, Bosnia-Herzegovina, etc.). The workshop is a unique experience for its participants who, by using digital media tools, are able to present the stories behind the monuments, resulting in an increased awareness of the responsibility of the individual in the memorialization process. The students had the chance to discuss historical questions, form their own opinions, conduct research, and think about issues such as why and what to remember, the role of monuments, and how to face alternative narratives about the past. An appropriate follow-up to this project is bringing the videos to schools, discussing them, and encouraging younger generations to reflect critically on these topics.

The Memory Walk films are made according to a common structure. Since most of them are about monuments connected to modern history, with a few choosing to focus on the Holocaust, they are a good basis for comparison between how certain communities commemorate their victims and the contemporary reception of these memorials. The films reflect the viewpoint of the student

groups who made them and the history and interpretation of the monuments, both of which can then in turn be used again as a source for future workshops. Memory Walk videos are also published on YouTube, therefore they are available to the wider public and can be accessed in many educational settings.

Memory Walk differs from regular classroom-based Holocaust education, as students are encouraged to reflect on the legacy of war and conflict in the face of the physical presence of monuments. The films themselves provide multiple perspectives on memorialization by focusing on the individual roles of monuments in our society and showcasing the public’s understanding of memorials in their own communities.



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# FILMING THE PAST FOR THE PRESENT

## Gabor Kalman

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*"The purpose of memory is not simply to preserve the past, but to protect the future."*

President Barack Obama

Film is certainly one of the most important media of memorialization, and interviews are the backbone of most documentary films. When I talk about interviewing in my classes, my students often say: "Oh, no big deal, I was the editor of my high school newspaper" or "I worked for my College Radio station and I interviewed dozens of people." But interviewing for a documentary film is something entirely different and interviewing Holocaust survivors is a separate category altogether. It requires a very special approach. For my current film, *There Was Once...* (2011), I interviewed a variety of survivors, each telling me his or her very unique stories.

Not all survivors are equally willing to talk about their often horrific experiences and it is a great dilemma for a filmmaker to decide how persistent he or she should be to convince someone to talk, or whether it is better to be totally respectful and walk away from a potentially important story. Since most of my interview subjects were more or less my age, it gave me some kind of advantage, but I often ran into people who automatically declined at first asking. One time I became a bit more persuasive with a possible subject, trying to convince her that my goal was not to pry into her life just for my film's sake, but rather to emphasize that her story has important historical significance and should be passed on to future generations. She was

still resistant. Yet when I told her that I was a survivor myself, she finally agreed to the interview. As she gradually felt more and more comfortable and secure, we ended up with a two-hour interview. She told me things, she said, that she had never discussed with anyone before. At the end she smiled, put her hand on my shoulder, thanked me for being persistent and said: "You never said: 'Oh it must have been awful.'" Indeed I did not, because I know it was. I had been there too.

Also, I never ask, "How did you feel?"

I already know that. If people feel comfortable sitting across from another survivor, they often proceed to talk without any further questions or prompts. At times they may break down and you need to proceed delicately with not only what you want to ask, but also how you ask the next question.

*"History is something we choose to remember"*

Source Unknown

Indeed, interviewing Holocaust survivors one must always keep in mind that whatever they say, that is their memory; thus it is their history and their truth regardless of its accuracy. Often I sit across from the interview subject and, as they talk, the dates they recall, the places they seem to remember, the chain of events they are relating are often different from what I know or what I have learned from my research. Yet I never ever question their authenticity, never question their memory, because this is what they have been living with, and it is something that is especially theirs and often theirs alone.

One of the most devastating events that people describe in my film is the march of the nearly 600 Jews of Kalocsa, from the ghetto to the local railroad station. It was a very humiliating experience marching

through the streets of the city while the inhabitants lined up on the sidewalk watching. They were their neighbors, their friends, their employers or employees with their families, carrying their precious belongings, accompanied by the local gendarmes.

*Film Clip (2:27 minutes)<sup>1</sup>*

Dr. Marianna Heller and Gyöngyi Magó at Dr. Heller's home (Budapest)

Marianna: *The memorable eviction to the Ghetto. From there they marched us, I believe late at night to the railroad station. There was, I think a policeman, who told my mother that he'd hide me. But my mother would not let me. I remember dark, and that the procession was watched by the locals standing on both side of the street.*

Gyöngyi: *What did a six-year-old girl make out of this? Where was everyone going?*

Marianna: *Nothing, I think, nothing.*

Gyöngyi: *I am going with my mother. We are going somewhere. What did she tell you where you are going?*

Marianna: *She did not say anything... (breaks down crying)*

Gyöngyi: *Forgive me.*

Eva Gregory (Great Neck NY)

Eva: *I thought some of them felt sorry for us. Some of them I thought they were ... they were almost crying ... I watched them ... But some were ... happy to see us ... finally getting rid of us.*

Gyöngyi in front of her computer screen, in Kalocsa, reading

Gyöngyi: *I'll read an excerpt. "It was about 7:30 in the morning when the five hundred or so residents filed out on the street. The Gendarmes arranged us in rows of eight. Exactly at eight o'clock the order sounded and the march began. The heat of the late spring day became intense. I began to sweat in my horse blanket suit. On my face, beads of sweat mixed with the dust of Tomori Street."*

Shots of the abandoned railroad station. Music.

Some remembered it as eight o'clock in the morning, others the dark of early evening. As a filmmaker I do not feel obligated to check records for historical accuracy; I simply recorded their memories.

As a filmmaker I also try to stay away from the "show me what you are talking about. Tell me what I see" approach. Filmmakers have many resources at their disposal to convey memories as authentically as possible, without being limited to showing a series of talking heads. And this is often a problem with many recordings of archival interviews and their use in films. When using other imagery, music, art, animation, words, sound effects, or unique editing techniques one must always try to convey the memory of the person speaking and not the filmmaker's own interpretation of it. In this way, these personal memories of some unimaginable events in the past can reach out to people of all ages, nationalities, languages, and persuasions and communicate something that a neatly recorded interview filed away in some inaccessible archive cannot.

Of course there are exceptions. Remember Eva's face as she describes herself observing the people on the sidewalk as they watched the Jews being herded to the train station; her face is so expressive. No filmmaker should ever meddle with that. Yet no face is needed for the following scene.

*Film Clip (1:55 minutes)*

Tom Kertesz (Monterey, California)

Voice over. Scenes of the snow covered Jewish Cemetery and the Holocaust Memorial Tablets in Kalocsa: *More was lost than just lives. My maternal grandfather is buried in Kalocsa... My paternal grandfather is buried in Budapest... My mother is buried in Montevideo, Uruguay... My paternal grandmother is buried in New York... I'll probably be buried in Monterey, California and the others just spread across the globe! And I feel almost as bad about that as I feel about the death of my father who was buried in a mass grave in Russia.*

*This total dissolution of family ties is another*

<sup>1</sup> For more information on the film *There Was Once...*, please see <http://www.therewasoncefilm.com>.

*devastation that was brought about by the Holocaust. It was not meant to be that way. We lived there for several generations in Kalocsa. We were supposed to be living and dying there.*  
Close up shots of the Memorial Tablets.  
Music. Fade out.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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*Commemorating the seventy-year anniversary of the Holocaust in Hungary, this book focuses on current practices in teaching the Holocaust. In June 2014, a group of professors, scholars, museum directors, and activists involved in memorial projects met at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, to discuss the future of Holocaust Studies. This subsequent book publication considers the potential of Holocaust memorialization and memory work to serve as a catalyst for addressing discrimination today by exploring different innovative teaching practices in higher education as well as bold and creative civic and institutional initiatives.*

*The authors who contributed to this book project come from across Europe and North America and their work showcases new directions in Holocaust education and commemoration.*

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ISBN 978-615-80159-0-5



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*Tom Lantos*  
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Cover design based on the conference logo by Conint-Print Kft