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MEMORIA

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80. ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING IN SOBIBOR

COURAGE TO ACT:
RESCUE IN
DENMARK

POEMS FROM
AUSCHWITZ"

POCKETKNIFE
FROM TEREZÍN

UNDERGROUND
ARCHIVE OF THE
WARSAW GHETTO
EXHIBITION

"NOTEBOOK OF

STANISLAV
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MORE
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Among the people with whom there is no contact after the Hamas attack is Alex Dancyg. He has likely been abducted, and we hope that he is still alive.

We know him well. He is an upright man, a man of truth and great goodness. A **man of justice, grace and generosity** (Quran 16:90). He devoted himself to teaching how the evil, perverse, and godless system of Nazi Germany could destroy good, peaceful, and innocent people. He is close to our hearts.

We **appeal for his release** (3:133-134) to **anyone who can influence it** (59:9). Fighting against what is perceived as evil cannot lead to even greater evil. The **innocent and righteous have the right to live in harmony and peace. This principle applies to everyone** (41:43), including Alex Dancyg, who, through his teachings, bears witness to the innocence and righteousness of unfairly treated victims.

We all must seek peaceful solutions, particularly in a land that has witnessed great things and deeply unworthy things. **We cannot become the source of ever greater evil.**

#STANDWITHALEX

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UPRISING IN SOBIBÓR

On 12 October 2023, families of the Sobibór Survivors, representatives of many countries, international institutions, and martyrdom museums took part in the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the German Nazi death camp in Sobibór. On that day, we symbolically opened a new spatial arrangement of the Memorial Site. The event was held under Honorary Patronage of the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda.

The main part of the commemorative ceremony was opened by Mr Marvin Raab – son of the prisoner uprising participant Esther Raab. In his speech he described the shadow that the history of Sobibór would cast both on the survivors and on the humanity at present: But don't be fooled by words. Those who escaped from Sobibór didn't escape. As my mother put it: "There is no escape from Sobibór". Not for me. Not for Poland. Not for Germany. Not for the world. "Even God cannot escape from Sobibór."

In the letter addressed to the ceremony participants, the President of the Republic of Poland Mr Andrzej Duda emphasized: 80 years ago this place witnessed an indescribable suffering and heroic courage, that we have the duty to remember and recall. That is what we owe to the murdered victims and to the survivors, but also to the forthcoming generations that will shape the fates of Poland, Europe, and the world. It is our duty to tell them the truth, which will allow them to build upon a solid foundation of justice and peace. [...] The genocide committed here shall always shake the conscience of the humankind.

Approximately 180,000 Jews were murdered in the Sobibór extermination camp. The Polish Jews constituted over half of that death toll. The remaining victims were the citizens of various German-occupied countries, primarily of the Netherlands. The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands mentioned that in his speech: One-third of all Dutch Holocaust victims died at Sobibor – more than 34,000 Jewish women, men and children. Sobibor is an ink-black chapter in the Dutch history of the Second World War. [...] And so, I'm pleased that this redesigned place of remembrance has now been completed. I'd like to thank our partners from Poland, Slovakia and Israel for all their hard work. Together, we will make sure we can keep telling this story. Yes, because of the past. But also because of the here and now.

In his speech, the Minister of the Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, Mr Miroslav Wlachovský remarked: This is a place to remember the sacrifices of the victims, learn the truth and take lessons from the past. [...] What you see around is the largest graveyard of Slovak citizens outside their homeland.

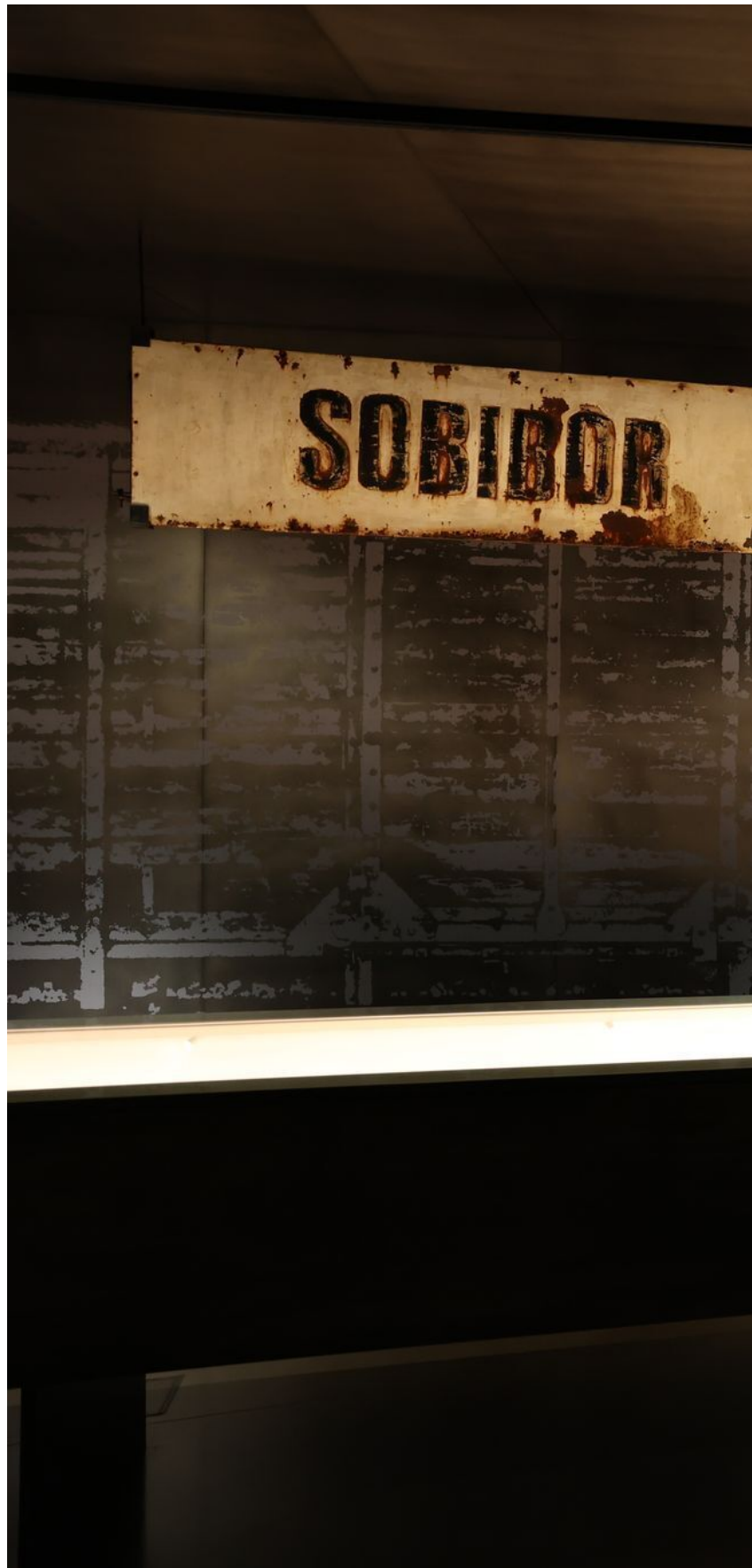
- Unlike those heroic Jewish victims, WE CAN and DO know more about what happened at Sobibór. To an extent that is uncommon in Holocaust documentation and research, Particularly in regard to the death camps of "Operation Reinhard". HERE, we can - and MUST - accurately envisage and tell in detail the terrible factual truth. [...] That goal, that mission is what inspired and energized, the remarkable process that has transpired over the past 15 or so years at Sobibór and about Sobibór – wrote in his letter Mr Dani Dayan, the Chairman of the Vad Vashem Institute in Israel.



their presence: This ceremony is our homage to the victims of the camp. From today, this tribute gains a new form and meaning – 180,000 Jewish women, children, and men are now honoured with a new commemoration that complements the exhibition which we opened three years ago. Thus, the international project undertaken by Poland, Israel, the Netherlands, and Slovakia comes to an end. That initiative – as defined in the agreement signed by those countries – was to establish a museum that would convey the history of the genocide to the present and the future generations – he summarised.

After the speeches, prayers were said by the representatives of various religions and faiths. The Chief Rabbi of Poland, Mr Michael Schudrich initiated this part with a message: I do not have to tell you, how after the days of transport the people arrived here, they were separated from their families, and – above all – murdered, just because they were Jews. I do not have to tell you, that it all started with hate speech. [...] I do not have to tell you what is happening just a few kilometres from here in Ukraine. [...] I do not have to tell you what happened in Israel last Shabbat on the day of the Simchat Torah. I have no words for that. I thought about the word "bestiality". Not enough. "Barbarity" – a bit closer. But maybe – oh dear God – we have to coin a new word to name this – hamasism. The prayers were also said by Fr. Dr Kazimierz Gruda – the bishop of Siedlce, Fr. Dr Jarosław Szczur – the parson of the John the Evangelist orthodox church parish in Chełm, and Fr. Wojciech Rudkowski – the parson of the evangelic-Augsburg parish in Radom and Kielce.

At the end of the ceremony, the survivors' families, state delegations, and representatives of various memorials and institutions, lead wreathes at the clearing with the mass graves – the place where the ashes of the Sobibór victims rest.





COURAGE TO ACT: RESCUE IN DENMARK

A new exhibition about the extraordinary rescue of Denmark's Jewish population in 1943, opened on October 15 at New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

It commemorates—through archival materials, photographs, recordings, testimonials, and other artifacts—one of the most effective and exceptional instances of mass resistance in modern history. This inspiring moment of individual and collective action raises the daunting question: do you have the courage to act?

Despite the enormous risk, Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors of all ages mobilized to evacuate thousands of Danish Jews to Sweden, as threats of deportations increased. Together, these ordinary citizens united against Nazism and saved nearly 95% of Denmark's 7,800-person Jewish population.

Designed for visitors ages nine and up, the exhibition incorporates themes of bravery and resilience to help young people make connections to their own lives and reflect on the dangers of prejudice, as well as their own potential for moral and courageous action.

Created in conjunction with the award-winning firm Local Projects, Courage to Act uses state-of-the-art technology and creative storytelling, including dynamic hologram-like technology, to immerse visitors in the story, allowing them to hear directly from the past through the stories of people who engaged in the rescue and whose lives were saved.

"We've been fortunate to work with Local Projects to bring this innovative exhibition to life and discover new ways to educate the public, particularly young people, through engaging technology," said Jack

Kliger, Museum President and CEO. "As the number of Holocaust survivors decreases and we confront resurgent antisemitism, we must proactively engage new generations in the fight for a better world. Our charge is to inspire and equip young people to be compassionate citizens and leaders."

The project director for Courage to Act is Ellen Bari, the author and creator of award-winning, multimedia exhibits and programs for children and adults. Bari's own family was forced into the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp in Czechoslovakia, where the Danish Jews who were not rescued were also sent.

"Eighty years later it seems almost impossible that the people of Denmark took such acts of courage," said Ellen Bari, the exhibition project director. "Yet those who risked their lives to save their neighbors saw it as simply 'the right thing to do.' It's the simplicity of that reasoning that underscores how truly incredible this story is. I am honored to share these acts of courage with young people, as they think about opportunities in their own lives for positive action and their own potential. As the Talmud says, 'to save a life, is to save the entire world.' We all have that potential."

Working alongside Bari, the Ukrainian artist Sveta Dorosheva and Bomb author Steve Sheinkin serve as the illustrator and script writer, respectively. Interactive Discovery Walls will allow visitors to look back in time as they open windows, part curtains, or step into a depiction of the Copenhagen Synagogue and be transported back to

Courage to Act: Rescue in Denmark

In the small nation of Denmark, young people and ordinary
citizens and even local officials stepped up to help rescue
thousands of refugees. It was a story of courage and
compassion that inspired the world. In 1943, the Danish
resistance helped rescue thousands of Jews, especially
children, and tried to help them escape the country.

The extraordinary rescue
effort was a story of
courage and compassion
that inspired the world.

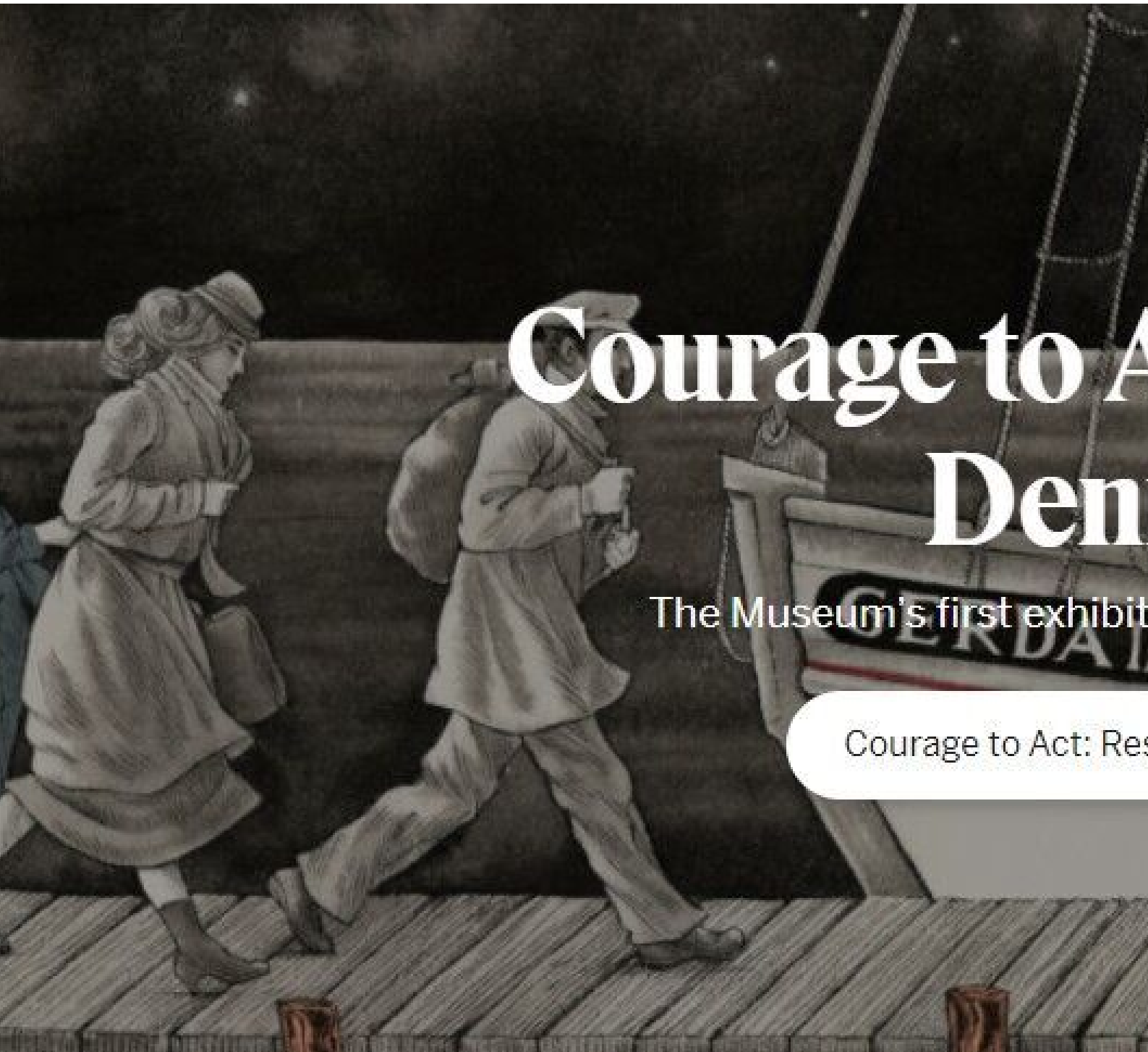
Standing up for what
was right. The story
of the rescue is a story
of courage and compassion.

Exhibition begins to the right →

"It was the right thing to do,
so we did it."
— *Single on Street*

CONTEXT VARIATION
Some of the stories in the exhibition are about
people who stepped up to help people in need.
Exhibition begins to the right →





Courage to Act Denmark

The Museum's first exhibit

Courage to Act: Res

Year. In an improvised act of resistance, Danes from all walks of life worked to hide their Jewish neighbors any way they could.

Within days, Sweden announced it would accept all Danish Jews as refugees. Some three hundred Danish vessels—from fishing boats to kayaks—made perilous and clandestine passages across the Øresund Sound to Sweden, ferrying more than 7,000

refugees, or over 95% of all Jews within Denmark, to safety. The compassionate response of Swedish communities saved those Jews who reached their shores from the concentration camps. Unlike most other countries in Europe, Denmark also protected the property of Jewish refugees.

At the war's end, it received its returning population with open arms.



Act: Rescue in Denmark

tion for visitors aged 9 and up

Rescue in Denmark



yes i can

Bloomberg
Philanthropies

Thanks
TO SCANDINAVIA

LEON LEVY FOUNDATION



"NOTEBOOK OF POEMS FROM AUSCHWITZ"

THE MUSEUM'S POLISH-ENGLISH-SWEDISH PUBLICATION
PRESENTED IN SWEDEN.

During the Gothenburg Book Fair, the most prominent literary event in Scandinavia, the Museum showcased an exceptional trilingual publication: "Notebook of poems from Auschwitz". The Polish-English-Swedish publication includes a reprint of a valuable document, a notebook containing a dozen or so poems written by female prisoners of Auschwitz II-Birkenau during their imprisonment. This particular collection was probably created in the camp hospital in late 1943 or early 1944.

The promotion was initiated by the director of the Polish Institute in Stockholm, Paweł Ruskiewicz, who was also the originator and co-partner of the publication "Notebook with Poems from Auschwitz".

He described his first encounter with Bożena Janina Zdunek's notebook in the following way: 'I received an invitation to visit Mr Adam's residence. The moment the documents were retrieved from the cabinet, along with this notebook, will remain etched in my memory forever. We immediately decided that this should be exhibited more extensively to the world because we owe it particularly to Mr Adam's mother, the prisoners, Mr Adam, and his children.'

The book presentation was attended by Joanna Hofman, the Polish Ambassador to Sweden, and Adam Zdunek, the son of Bożena Zdunek, a survivor of Auschwitz who carried the notebook through two camps and transported it to Sweden in 1945 as part of the Swedish Red Cross campaign "White Buses".

'When my mother was rescued from the camp and arrived in Sweden, she was completely emaciated and weighed only 27 kg. The only objects she had with her were a medal with the Virgin Mary and a notebook from Auschwitz that she had miraculously saved,' Adam Zdunek recounted during the promotion.

The 32-page notebook with broad lines contains 17 camp poems written in various hand writings. Among others, these include works by Krystyna Żywulska (actually Sonia Landau): "March", "Appeal", "Letter to Mother", "Dance", and "Mum, be, healthy". These are the poems that constitute the canon of Auschwitz camp poetry.

'It is vital to consider both the circumstances of the notebook's creation and rescue. These poems are fundamentally a testimony to the struggle to maintain human dignity in the inhuman world created by the SS system. On the other hand, preserving the notebook is a demonstration of determination and tremendous courage, said Director Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, representing the Museum at the Fair.

At one of the meetings, fragments of poems in Polish, Swedish and English were interpreted by actresses Małgorzata Pieczyńska and Sara Sommerfeldt, granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor.



30 YEARS OF THE BRANDENBURG MEMORIALS FOUNDATION

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AT THE STATE CHANCELLERY IN POTSDAM

The Brandenburg Memorials Foundation (SBG) celebrated its 30th anniversary today at the invitation of SBG Director Prof. Dr. Axel Drecoll in a joint ceremony with Dr. Dietmar Woidke, Prime Minister of the State of Brandenburg. The ceremony was also attended by the Director of the Ravensbrück Museum and Memorial (Dr Andrea Genest, deputising for Prof. Dr Axel Drecoll), the Minister of Culture and Science (Dr Manja Schüle), Aaron Sagui (MP for the State of Israel), Ib Katznelson (a survivor of Ravensbrück concentration camp), and Leonore Bellotti (a former inmate of the Soviet special camp at Sachsenhausen). Claudia Roth, Federal Government Plenipotentiary for Culture and Media, delivered a video greeting.

Dr Andrea Genest, Director of the Ravensbrück Museum and Memorial, deputising for Prof. Dr Axel Drecoll, said: "The establishment of the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation in 1993 marked a turning point for Memorials in the Federal Republic, which quickly evolved into modern history museums. We are now in a situation where the survivors' political and moral voice is disregarded. This is a painful vacuum that can only be filled by a concerted effort, combining a critical historical consciousness with an unequivocal rejection of anti-Semitism, racism and social exclusion. The buildings and monuments of historical crime scenes are points of reference for remembrance. They must be preserved permanently. Memorials need human and financial resources to meet new challenges such as the digital revolution and educational work."

Dr Dietmar Woidke, Prime Minister of the State of Brandenburg, said: "It is impossible to comprehend the unimaginable crimes of the National Socialist governments. However, some sites in Brandenburg make these crimes and sufferings more vivid and palpable. Sites that are shocking and overwhelming. The Brandenburg Memorials Foundation meticulously safeguards these sites, approaching their care with profound empathy, a clear vision and exceptional historical knowledge, effectively highlighting the political terror of the past century. It reminds and warns that the past must not be repeated. This is why the states of Brandenburg and the Federal Republic of Germany established the Foundation 30 years ago. Undertaking this mission was unquestionably challenging for the Foundation. Nevertheless, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Brandenburg an der Havel and Belower Wald are today multicultural sites, open memorials and important history museums, with the Jamlitz and the Leistikowstraße Memorial and Meeting Place in Potsdam as recent additions. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation go to Director Axel Drecoll and all those who work for the Foundation, both professionally and as volunteers. I assure you that the country's government will continue to support this indispensable work."

Minister for Culture and Media Claudia Roth: "For the past 30 years, the primary objective and guiding principle of the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation has been the dignified commemoration and involvement of the public in researching the history of Nazi crimes. With profound expertise, unwavering commitment, and visionary thinking, Axel Drecoll's team has developed immersive commemoration and learning sites aimed at young people and increasingly diverse target groups through modern educational initiatives. The Foundation plays a crucial role in ensuring the victims of the National Socialist regime's terror and



Gedenkstätte und Museum
Sachsenhausen



Mahn- und Gedenkstätte
Ravensbrück



Gedenkstätte Todesmarsch im
Belower Wald



Gedenk- und Begegnungsstätte
Leistikowstraße Potsdam



Gedenkstätte
**Opfer der
Euthanasie-
Morde**



Gedenkstätte
**Zuchthaus
Brandenburg-
Görden**



30 Jahre Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten



rise of right-wing parties in Europe. In light of this, it is crucial to assess whether future historical exhibitions will sufficiently address the challenges of our digitised society. How do we ensure that younger generations, the future voters, develop an empathetic attitude despite constant exposure to awful content on social media and do not succumb to radical movements? I do not envy the staff of the Memorials as they embark on this arduous task of transformation into the future.

Leonore Bellotti, a former prisoner of the Soviet special camp at Sachsenhausen: "I find it extremely important that the Foundation and its Memorials, which attract many visitors from home and abroad, are supported in their diverse work of commemoration. I donated valuable memorabilia to the Sachsenhausen Memorial a few years ago to support their work. This memorabilia was from the camp where both my mother and I were imprisoned and where I met my future husband. We made small handicrafts of great importance to us from what little we had. We kept these small personal items from the special camp in the family for decades with special care, as they reminded us of the most difficult period of our lives. I am delighted that they will now be preserved permanently in their place of origin and tell the story of our fate."

The Brandenburg Memorials Foundation (SBG), founded in 1993, is an independent foundation under public law that manages the Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum, the Ravensbrück Memorial and Museum, the Memorials of the Brandenburg-Görden Prison and Victims of Murder by Euthanasia in Brandenburg an der Havel, the Leistikowstraße Memorial and Meeting Place in Potsdam and the Lieberose-Jamlitz Memorial and the Death March Memorial in Belower Wald as branches of Sachsenhausen. The goal of the foundation is to remember acts of terror, war and violence, foster public dialogue on the subject and ensure dignified commemoration for victims of the crimes of the National Socialist regime, Soviet occupation and the GDR. This year, the state of Brandenburg is allocating approximately €4.03 million to support the activities of the SBG, with an additional €3.56 million being provided by the federal government.

CLOSING OF THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS GUSEN MEMORIAL

THE RESULTS HAVE BEEN SUMMARISED IN A FINAL REPORT AND
TRANSFERRED TO A MASTER PLAN

The concluding event of the participation process for the expansion of the Gusen Memorial took place in St. Georgen an der Gusen on the evening of Wednesday, 11 October 2023, in the presence of many of those who had contributed to it.

In a process that has taken one and a half years, regional, national and international interest groups have had the opportunity to come together to present and discuss their expectations and hopes for a new memorial site.

The results have been summarised in a final report and transferred to a master plan for the future shaping of the memorial.

The master plan sets out the parameters for the future design of the site. It defines the forms in which the grounds and the existing buildings will be used, presents concepts for making them open and accessible and gives recommendations about new buildings, adaptations to existing buildings and landscaping.

In the coming phase, the master plan will serve as the basis for a competition to redesign the Gusen Memorial. A period of eight years has been earmarked for the implementation.

On the morning of 11 October 2023, the Council of Ministers of the Austrian government was already deciding to present a draft for an amendment to the Memorials Act for further debate. The amendment is intended to entrust the Mauthausen Memorial with the expansion and redesign of the Gusen Memorial, which is already under its care, and to guarantee funding for the multi-year design process now due to start.

The further development of the Gusen Memorial is a project of national and international significance. By involving a wide range of diverse organisations and individuals in the discussion process, the Mauthausen Memorial has taken a new path for ensuring the participation of society as a whole in the culture of commemoration and the politics of memory of the crimes of National Socialism.

[Download final report and master plan](#)

Abschlussveranstaltung

Beteiligte
KZ-Gedenks
...



Closing Event

Participation Process
Gusen Memorial



STANISLAV ŠMOLÍK AND A POCKETKNIFE FROM TEREZÍN

Stanislav Šmolík was born to father Alois and mother Anežka (née Loukotová) in Libušín near Kladno on June 25, 1906. After finishing his school attendance he earned his living as a tinsmith. Already in his youth he came into contact with communist ideas, and in 1925 he joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Shortly after the Nazi occupation of the Czech lands in March 1939 the German security forces launched a mass arrest action against leftist-oriented citizens, German émigrés and Jews. Codenamed Aktion Gitter (Action Bars), this police crackdown also hit the Kladno region where many communists were detained. Another wave of reprisals came in June 1939 after the shooting of Wilhelm Kniest, chief constable of the German Order Police. His death triggered off a renewed spate of arrests since the culprit could not be captured for a long time. These two clampdowns paralyzed the entire underground resistance network, including the Kladno district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Stanislav Šmolík, who had the benefit of being relatively unknown to the authorities in Kladno as he had moved into the district only in 1938, was actively involved in the subsequent revival of the anti-Nazi network. He was helped by the newly appointed regional secretary of the Communist Party, Ladislav Ševčík (1908–1943) from Ostrava, cover name Šrámek, who was hiding in Šmolík's flat for some time. The reconstructed underground communist resistance group then focused primarily on publishing leaflets, distributing the communist newspaper

Rudé právo and organizing money collections for the families of arrested members.

Stanislav Šmolík was as a member of the Kladno district committee of the underground Communist Party until a random house search. Even though this incident had ended without any consequences for Šmolík himself, he was rather recalled on conspiracy grounds and served as a messenger for the organization. Gestapo agent Jan Vacek denounced most of the members of the party's district committee at the end of April 1940. After their arrest, Ludvík Kuna, one of the detained, gave away Šmolík's name only after brutal interrogation. The Gestapo arrested Stanislav Šmolík on May 6. He then spent over a year in investigatory custody in the prisons in Zwickau and Dresden; in September 1941 the Higher Land Court sentenced him for preparing high treason. However, Šmolík, who began serving his three-and-a-half-year long sentence in Waldheim, contracted tuberculosis and had to be transferred in September 1943 to the prison in Mírov in Moravia, reserved for inmates suffering from lung diseases.

He was supposed to be released in February 1944 but just as many other inmates he was kept in jail. This was followed by his transfer to Prague-



Pocketknife made by Stanislav Šmolík.
Photo: Pamatnik Terezin

MORE IMPORTANT THAN LIFE: THE UNDERGROUND ARCHIVE OF THE WARSAW GHETTO EXHIBITION

From June 29, 2023, to January 7, 2024, the National Socialism Documentation Center in Munich will host the exhibition "More Important Than Life: The Underground Archive of the Warsaw Ghetto", organized in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Institute.

The exhibition is devoted to the underground archive of the Warsaw Ghetto. In 1940, following the invasion of Poland by the German Wehrmacht, the German occupying forces cordoned off a large section of Warsaw and forced the Jewish population of the city and the surrounding villages and towns to move there. In order to document these events for the outside world and for posterity, the historian Emanuel Ringelblum initiated an unprecedented campaign to collect material in the ghetto—the collection today known as the Ringelblum Archive. This collective of academics, writers, and activists working secretly in the ghetto called themselves Oneg Shabbat (Joy of the Sabbath). The archive assembled by Oneg Shabbat is a unique and outstanding example of Jewish self-assertion during the Shoah and represents the first attempt to document the German-initiated mass murder of European Jews directly, as it was happening, and later to archive this documentation. As such it constitutes an act of civil resistance.

The archive is preserved in the Jewish Historical Institute Warsaw and became part of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 1999. It comprises some 35,000 sheets of notes, diary entries, essays, photos, drawings, official documents, and other testimony to everyday life. The original goal of Oneg Shabbat had been simply to document life in the ghetto, where Jews from Warsaw and other Polish regions, Jews deported from Germany and from countries under German occupation—including some who had converted to Christianity—as well as Roma lived alongside one another, trying to survive in the oppressively overcrowded conditions of the closed-off ghetto in the center of Warsaw. Here, as many as 450,000 people were herded together to live under inhumane conditions.

When it became increasingly clear from 1942 onwards where the German occupation policy was leading, Oneg Shabbat began to document the Shoah—the organized mass murder of European Jews in the German extermination camps in the East. The members of Oneg Shabbat, who at times numbered perhaps fifty, worked secretly. Although we do not know exactly how many people worked for Oneg Shabbat, we do know that only two of them survived the Shoah. Most of the archive was preserved, however, buried in a hiding place beneath the ruins of the ghetto.



WICHTIGER

ALS

29.06.23 —
07.01.24

UNSER

LEBEN

Directors: Mirjam Zadoff
(München) i Monika Krawczyk
(Warsaw)

Curators: Katharina Person, Piotr
Rypson, Monika Krawczyk
(Warsaw), Ulla-Britta Vollhardt,
Mirjam Zadoff (München)

Munich Documentation Center
for the History of National
Socialism / NS-
Dokumentationszentrum
München, Max-Mannheimer-
Platz 1, 80333 Munich

STUDY VISIT FOR AUSCHWITZ- BIRKENAU MUSEUM GUIDES ORGANIZED BY YAHAD-IN UNUM

Since 2018, the French organization Yahad-In Unum has been working with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum by conducting specialized training seminars for the Museum guides. The Yahad-In Unum Foundation, whose main focus is field research in Central and Eastern Europe on the Holocaust by bullets, organized a two-day study visit for the guides this year for the first time.

The visit's main objective was to work on less known and often unmemorialized sites related to the Holocaust, as well as to meet with eyewitnesses. The field trip program was centered around tracing the fate of Jewish communities that found themselves in the Miechów County before the war and during the German occupation, particularly in places like Miechów, Działoszyce, Dzierążnia, and Słomniki. 'We are pleased that we could organize this study visit for two groups of guides. It is important for us to expand our knowledge of the local dimension of the Holocaust and reach out to scattered sites of executions and burials of Jews throughout the region,' said Michał Chojak, Director of Yahad-In Unum Research Center. 'Such a field trip provides the opportunity for multidimensional work based on archival sources and an understanding of the topography of sites related to various stages of local Jewish population extermination. We also had the chance to meet with a history witness, Ms. Marianna, who is over one hundred years old. Such individuals are becoming increasingly rare," he added.

The main goal of the visit was to reconstruct the chronology of events during various stages of the murder of local Jewish population extermination with the course of Operation Reinhardt. In Miechów, the participants walked through the streets of the former ghetto, reached an unmemorialized burial site of those shot during the June 1942 deportations near the railway tracks, from which most were transported to Bełżec. They also visited the site of execution and burial of 630 Jewish men, women, and children in the Chodówki Forest. In Działoszyce, they explored the ruins of the synagogue and a mass grave of over 1500 victims, shot on-site during the ghetto liquidation operation. An unmarked burial site for 33 individuals in Dzierążnia, a small village a few kilometers from Działoszyce, allowed for discussion about the survival strategies of Jews during the third phase of the Holocaust in the region.

"This is a very valuable experience for me and my colleagues who participate in these seminars because it offers a different perspective from what we typically discuss with Museum visitors. It also shows what we can add to our daily work, presenting the history of Polish Jews and those from other countries who



In EVIDENCE

The Interactive Map of The Holocaust by Bullets

FIND OUT MORE

Yahad-In Unum is a non-governmental organization founded in 2004 in Paris by Father Patrick Desbois. Its main mission is to conduct research on the Holocaust by bullets in Central and Eastern Europe, collecting firsthand testimonies and identifying sites related to the crime. Research also covers documenting crimes against other victim groups, including Roma, psychiatric hospital patients, and Soviet prisoners of war. To date, the organization has conducted 210 research missions, recorded over 7,600 testimonies, and located more than 3,250 execution sites. Yahad-In Unum makes its unique collection of recorded testimonies available to academic communities worldwide. As part of its educational efforts, the organization conducts seminars, training sessions, workshops, and study visits for various groups, including students, educators, and teachers. The foundation also leads projects dedicated to documenting mass crimes in Guatemala, Iraq, Syria, Ukraine.

Learn more about Yahad-In Unum at:

www.yiu.ngo

www.yahadmap.org

“BURNING” – EXHIBITION OF CUT-OUTS BY MONIKA KRAJEWSKA

Why so few material traces of Jewish culture have survived until today? What does that tell us about the history of the Jewish community inhabiting Polish lands? Monika Krajevska poses such questions in her series of cut-outs and collages titled "Burning." In her works, the artist ponders over the fate of Jewish religious objects which got lost, were looted or intentionally destroyed in the course of wars and a series of catastrophes that befell Jews.

The artist points to the fact that this destruction was a particularly painful loss for the community. In Jewish culture, objects related to the cult belong to the realm of sacrum. The most revered are Torah scrolls (the Pentateuch), kept in the aron ha-kodesh, namely a special ornately decorated cabinet which refers to the Temple, the place where G-d is present. Worn-out scrolls are not to be thrown away—they are kept in a special place called genizah and then buried in the ground. Therefore, destruction of holy writs or religious objects is a major desecration, and salvaging them is perceived as a heroic sacrifice.

The series consists of thirty-one works in which the artist refers to the objects related to synagogue cult and transfers them to the

traditional Jewish paper-cutting technique, painstakingly recreating the symbolism and ornamentation of Jewish art from East-Central Europe—stylised floral decoration, symbolic representations of animals, a repertoire of traditional sacred Judaic symbols (a menorah, Torah and the Tablets of Law, the Temple) and calligraphic quotations from religious texts and prayers. In order to introduce reflection on loss and destruction, the artist subjects her painstaking work to destruction: she tears apart sections of the works after cutting them out and burns the ends of the sheets. She uses tinted paper as a background for the cut-outs, incorporating the motif of fire, ashes and ruins. In the representations, she incorporates quotations from religious texts or classics of modern Jewish literature, in which there are





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Curator: Tamara Sztyma
Organisation: Dominika Dragan-Alcantara
Graphic art and key visual: Piotr Matosek
Production: Jacek Szczygieł, Witold Stąbuszewski
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Registrar: Aneta Jasionek

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