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Plakat zapowiadający premierę Teweja Milczarza według powieści Szolem Alejchem w Łódzkim Teatrze Żydowskim, reż. M. Lipman, 1946
Plakat announcing the premiere of Teweje the Milkman based on Szolem Alejchem's novel at the Jewish Theater in Łódź, dir. M. Lipman, 1946

"1945. NOT THE END, NOT THE BEGINNING". NEW EXHIBITION AT POLIN MUSEUM

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We invite all of you to work closely with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we should share with our readers. We also accept proposals for articles.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

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THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION AT THE RAVENSBRÜCK MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Anually, the Ravensbrück Memorial Museum marks the anniversary of the liberation of the women's concentration camp Ravensbrück on 30st April 1945, the historic date of its liberation by the Red Army. The anniversary is jointly organised by the Ravensbrück Memorial Museum and the International Ravensbrück Committee. The centrepiece of the commemorations is the central commemoration ceremony with speeches by survivors of the concentration camp and representatives of state and federal politics. There will also be a wreath-laying ceremony on the banks of Lake Schwedt. Throughout the weekend there will be a programme of events including exhibition openings, guided tours, readings and other commemorative events.

Historical background

Shortly before the end of the war, the International, Swedish and Danish Red Cross evacuated around 7,500 prisoners to Sweden, Switzerland and France. Following an evacuation order, the remaining 20,000 prisoners were driven north-west in marching columns. Many died on these death marches. On 30st April 1945, the Red Army liberated the Ravensbrück women's concentration camp and about 3,000 severelly ill prisoners who had been left there.

But the liberation did not end the suffering of many women, men and children. Many died in the weeks, months and years that followed. Those who survived often suffered for decades from the effects of their imprisonment in concentration camps.

After liberation, the Soviet army took over large parts of the former concentration camp. From 1948, former prisoners and the Association of Victims of the Nazi Regime tried to preserve at least the area around the crematorium and turn it into a place of remembrance. The first memorial service was held there in September 1948. From then on, commemorations were held every year and the site continues to be a place of meeting, remembrance and exchange.

80th anniversary of the Liberation

1st to 4th May 2025

From 1 to 4 May 2025 we will commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the women's concentration camp Ravensbrück. We cordially invite you to attend the events in Fürstenberg/Havel. Simultaneous translation (DE/EN/FR/PL) will be provided for the main commemoration and other events. The programme will be available soon. The year 2025 will mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Ravensbrück concentration camp. It will probably be the last anniversary that many survivors will be able to attend in person.

The perspective of the 2nd and 3rd generation is therefore becoming increasingly important. Descendants of former prisoners tell the stories of their relatives and reflect on their own family history. Their active participation in public discourse and



JAHRESTAG DER BEFREIUNG

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“1945. NOT THE END, NOT THE BEGINNING” – NEW EXHIBITION AT POLIN MUSEUM

On the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, POLIN Museum has prepared an exhibition telling the story of the fate of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust and their post-war experience.

Amid the ruins of the old world, they tried to rebuild their lives. There were few of them left—ninety percent of the Jewish community in Poland had been murdered. Deprived of almost everything—loved ones, community, home—they faced a dramatic choice: to stay or to leave?

The new temporary exhibition, “1945. Not the End, Not the Beginning”, presents the post-war reality through their eyes. The voices of the protagonists are illustrated by personal mementos, letters, photographs, and documents, complemented by works of contemporary artists.”

“On the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, we tell the story of what that time meant for Holocaust survivors—what they felt and thought, the decisions they made in the first post-war years. It is largely the story of one group—those who survived the Holocaust—conveyed through individual lives and personal perspectives. Perhaps we are familiar with other narratives about that period in Poland and the world. Let us also listen to this one, which for many years remained untold and largely unknown. Though painful and difficult, it deserves to be heard and included in the broader account, to be remembered as a crucial chapter in the story of the end of World War II and of the people who lived through it,” said Zygmunt Stępiński, Director of POLIN Museum, at the press conference inaugurating the exhibition.

End or beginning?

In popular understanding, World War II ended in 1945. While it should have been a time of euphoria, for Jews struggling with unimaginable loss and loneliness, it was primarily a moment of decision—what now?

“Crowds take to the streets of towns and cities, people kiss their liberators, throw flowers, dance. That’s what the end of the war was supposed to look like. But how did those who came out of the Holocaust feel at that moment? In dozens of testimonies, the same words are repeated: instead of joy at the end of the war—relief, and at the same time, despair,” write Anna Bikont and Dr. Kamil Kijek, authors of the exhibition concept, in the introduction to the accompanying publication.

They continue: “On the eve of the outbreak of World War II, nearly 3.5 million Jews lived in Poland. They constituted the largest Jewish community in Europe and the second largest in the world. Nearly 90% of Polish Jews perished in the Holocaust. From one of the most important centers of Jewish civilization in the world, Poland became its cemetery.”



to rebuild Jewish communities, political activism, and life in hiding.

What became of little Dora Zoberman, who lost her closest relatives before the end of the war? How did teenage Pinchas Bursztyn, found after the liberation of Auschwitz among the dead in a pit of lime, manage to survive? What did the Pertman family's journey back from the USSR look like?

How did survivors feel returning to their towns after the trauma, only to discover their homes had long been taken, their belongings looted, and traces of their communities erased? In the cobblestones, they recognized gravestones—Jewish matzevot—and in household items, repurposed fragments of Torah scrolls. Jewish returnees were met by Polish neighbors with reluctant indifference, hostility, and often aggression.

Still, many stayed. They believed their future in Poland was not foreclosed and tried, with determination, to rebuild their community.

We also learn about those who left. The vast majority made that decision. Between 1944 and 1946, more than 200,000 Jews left Poland. They did not want to live in a cemetery; they could not bear the loneliness and the looming danger of post-war antisemitism.

"There is something deeply moving in the photo of a young man standing in the ruins of the ghetto, having lost his family and home in the Holocaust, yet helping survivors rebuild their lives elsewhere in the world. Yom Kippur was approaching—one of the most important Jewish holidays, ending the Ten Days of Repentance. In Judaism, it is a day of reconciliation and divine forgiveness. The beginning of a new life." This is how curator Zuzanna Schnepf-Kończak describes the photo of Zeev Szewach, who left Poland.

Historical testimony and contemporary art.

The harsh truth of post-1945 Jewish life in Poland is illustrated through photographs, documents, letters, leaflets, and personal mementos. The minimalist, contemplative exhibition design highlights the daily experiences of the protagonists—feelings of emptiness, uncertainty, and danger.

Contemporary artworks enrich the historical narrative and connect it to the present. Pieces by Marek Cecuła, Alicja Bielawska, Zuzanna Hertzberg, Maria Ka, Włodzimierz Zakrzewski, and Wiktor Freifeld use various media including ceramics, textiles, and music. Most works were created especially for the exhibition.

Before entering the exhibit, visitors are greeted by 40 white ceramic heads displayed in the museum lobby. "ZAAM by Marek Cecuła is the result of his reflections on the Holocaust and family experiences. The installation is the artist's expressive response to society's current state and the emotions evoked by a sense of threat and helplessness," said museum spokesperson Marta Dziewulska at the press conference.

The exhibition's prologue is a large-scale textile installation *jesteś tam w tym* (you are there in this) by Alicja Bielawska. As visitors move along the piece, crafted by master weaver Beata Wietrzyńska, they discover silver embroidery depicting personal items belonging to the exhibition's protagonists, carrying their memories and stories.

Fabric is also the base of Zuzanna Hertzberg's work. Playing on the ambiguity of the Polish expression *szmata* (rag), she created a banner in the style of Marian processional flags—only instead of a saint, she portrayed Hinda/Barbara Beatus, a Jewish communist activist and one of the exhibition's heroines.

In the exhibition space, visitors will also hear a unique Yiddish performance of the Song of the Jewish Miner. Artist Maria Ka recites the original lyrics by Elchanan Indelman. The co-producer and arranger is Aleksander Golor-Baszun.



The exhibition "1945. Not the End, Not the Beginning" is organized by the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in cooperation with the Jewish Historical Institute Association in Poland and the Emanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute.

The exhibition is open until 15 September 2025.

It is accompanied by numerous events, including guided tours and an academic conference.

More: [Accompanying Events to the Exhibition "1945. Not the End, Not the Beginning" | POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw].

CALL FOR PAPERS: VISIBILITIES OF MEMORY: THE REPRESENTATION OF SINTI AND ROMA IN HOLOCAUST FILM

Hosted by the Critical Film & Image Hub at the Research Centre on Antigypsyism (RCA) at Heidelberg University, this conference which will take place in November 12-14, 2025 aims to create a platform for scholarly exchange on a rarely explored topic: the representation of Sinti and Roma in Holocaust film.

Scholars, doctoral students, early-career researchers, and filmmakers from across Europe are invited to contribute to discussions on how mainstream productions, documentaries, social media videos, and computer games depict this marginalized narrative. Contributions in English and German are welcome.

Despite the prominence of Holocaust cinema, the genocide of the Sinti and Roma has rarely been the focus of landmark films in the genre, such as the television series *Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss* (USA, 1978), *Schindler's List* (USA, 1993) and *Life is Beautiful* (Italy/Germany, 1997), or Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoa* (France, 1985). Adaptations of *Naked Among Wolves* (FRG, 1960; GDR, 1963) celebrated the rescue of a Jewish boy from Buchenwald concentration camp, while the tragic story of the Sinti boy Willy Blum—put on a deportation list and later murdered in his place—was only recently brought to light by historian Annette Leo (cf. Leo 2018).

During the 1980s, films like *When Unku Was Ede's Friend* (GDR, 1981) and *Sidonie* (Austria, 1990) highlighted the fates of two Sinti girls during National Socialism. And the *Violins Stopped Playing* (Poland/UK, 1988) offered a rare portrayal of a Romani family's experience, while more recent films, including *Django – A Life for Music* (Germany/France, 2017) and *Gipsy* (Germany, 2011/2012), focused on figures such as musician Django Reinhardt and boxer Johann Trollmann, respectively.

Works such as *Being a Gypsy* (Sweden, 1970), *Injustice and Resistance - Romani Rose and the Civil Rights Movement* (Germany, 2022) by Peter Nestler, 'See you in heaven!' *The Sinti children from the St. Josefspflege* (Germany, 2003), *A People Uncounted* by Aaron Yeger (Canada, 2011), and *The Deathless Woman* by Roz Mortimer (UK, 2019) provide survivors of the Holocaust with a voice, addressing the enduring legacy of antigypsyism post-1945. Sinteza activist Melanie Spitta's *The Wrong Word*.

Reparation to Gypsies (Sinti) in Germany (Germany, 1987), shot in collaboration with director Katrin Seybold, is another significant contribution. Additionally, recent films by Romani filmmakers, such as *Korkoro (Liberty)* by Tony Gatlif (France, 2009) and *How I Became a Partisan* by Vera Lacková (Slovakia/Czech Republic, 2021), explore themes of resistance and intergenerational trauma. Adrian Oeser's *Wesley Swims* (Germany, 2024) further expands on the perspectives of the "third generation".

Academic disciplines including film studies, cultural studies, and history have long



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SENATE RESOLUTION ON THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH MARCH OF KL STUTTHOF PRISONERS

On 12 March 2025, the Senate of the Republic of Poland unanimously (by acclamation) passed a resolution on the 80th anniversary of the Death March of KL Stutthof prisoners.

This resolution serves to honour the memory of the victims and underscores the importance of commemorating this sombre chapter in history with the respect it deserves.

The discussion surrounding the resolution included notable figures such as Maria Kowalska, a former prisoner of the Stutthof concentration camp and participant in the Death March; Piotr Tarnowski, director of the Stutthof Museum in Sztutowo; and Rafał Miastowski, a member of the Museum Council. This event marked a significant historical moment, as it was the first instance in which the Polish parliament formally commemorated the victims of this harrowing event.

"It has been 80 years since the evacuation of the Stutthof concentration camp and its subcamps. (...) The Death March claimed the lives of approximately 17,000 victims," – the resolution states.

Beginning on 25 January 1945, the march represented a tragic conclusion to the history of the Stutthof concentration camp. Amidst severe winter conditions, with temperatures dropping to over 20 degrees below zero, approximately 33,000 prisoners were forced to march on foot, often in only striped uniforms. Many succumbed to hunger and exhaustion, while others were executed on the spot when they could no longer proceed.

Furthermore, the resolution highlights that after crossing the former border of the Free City of Gdańsk, the prisoners received support from the residents of Kashubia, who often risked their safety to provide food and assist with escapes. It is estimated that at least 2,000 individuals were saved through their courageous actions. The memoirs of Marek Dunin-Wąsowicz, a former prisoner of KL Stutthof, were also quoted:

"We were treated like their own children. We had everything. I have never experienced such solidarity between people in my life."

Thanks to the generosity of residents from Pruszcz Gdański, Straszyn, Niestępowo, Miszewo, Pomieczyno, Łebno, Strzecz, Żukowo, and Luzino, among others, some prisoners found refuge, and the welfare of children born during the march was ensured. The resolution also acknowledges the fates of those who did not survive, ensuring they received dignified burial rites. The people of these towns still care about preserving their memory to this day.

The Senate of the Republic of Poland expresses profound gratitude to the people of Kashubia for their willingness to assist the prisoners, who were often at significant personal risk. May their heroic actions serve as an example and reminder that we cannot be indifferent to human injustice," – reads the text of the resolution.



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WHEN A MUSLIM, PROTESTANT, AND CATHOLIC FREED A JEW FROM A CONCENTRATION CAMP

Reflections on an Interfaith Model of Resistance
and Faith Amidst Adversity

This reflection is indebted to the research and writing of Marc David Baer, Professor of International History at the London School of Economics and Political Science, specifically his article “Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus”¹. For more in-depth reading and research into the life of Hugo Marcus, as well as the dynamics, organization, and complexities of Muslims in Germany, particularly during Nazi rule, and relevant implications for interfaith relations, please refer to the aforementioned article as well as Baer’s book, *German, Jew, Muslim, Gay: The Life and Times of Hugo Marcus*.

Introduction

An imam, a Catholic priest, and a Protestant layperson walk into a Nazi concentration camp to negotiate the release of a Jewish convert to Islam—and succeed. Though this sounds entirely too good (or far-fetched) to be true, this was a real experience for Hugo Marcus, a Jewish convert to Islam detained in Barrack 18 at the Sachsenhausen/ Oranienburg concentration camp, as well for his advocates, Imam Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Father Georg of the Jesuit order, and Joachim Ungnad of the Confessing Church. Each of these individuals of different faith traditions and backgrounds became acquainted by attending various educational events and interfaith discussions at the Berlin Mosque². In their coming together in such a moment, we see that interreligious dialogue was not—nor is it now—the end point of such cross-religious relationships but rather the beginning of what can be transformative forces and movements in causes of justice and service to humanity.

As part of the 2022 FASPE program, I was humbled to walk onto the very same grounds where so many languished and died. While walking along its many paths, I came across a most inauspicious barrack marker at an inner corner of the camp: BARACKE 18. Here, Hugo Marcus was imprisoned. It was in this place where differences in faith led a group of individuals to coalesce, uniting in defense of the life of a fellow human being branded “other.”

This experience, seeing this place up close, led me to realize the value of Marcus’ story for interreligious work. In touching upon the singular life and faith journey of Hugo Marcus, as well as the responses by his community and fellow Muslims toward his situation, I hope, then, that we will discover lessons about strength in interfaith cooperation and faith-based activism relevant today. Additionally, we can see that despite the horror, an event like the negotiation at Sachsenhausen means—not only in that moment but also for persons of faith in the 21st century—finding ourselves unsure of the impact and power of our interconfessional alliances and coalitions. Furthermore, the events, reactions, and responses leading up to this moment—particularly those from various Muslim individuals and

1. Marc David Baer, “Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus,” *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 1 (January 2015): pp. 140-171, <https://doi.org/10.1093/>



A picture of the site of Barrack 18 at Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Oranienburg, where Hugo Marcus was held during his imprisonment in 1938. Marcus was incarcerated during the November Pogroms of that year, also known as Kristallnacht but was released shortly afterward in mid-November. Marcus' imprisonment, as well as that of thousands of others, served as a warning from the Nazi regime of what would await Jews should they choose to remain in Germany. Photo credit: Usama Malik

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2. The Berlin Mosque was built by the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement (Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at-i-Islam Lahore) and completed in 1926, serving as the first mosque in Berlin. For more information about the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement and the Berlin Mosque, see www.berlin.ahmadiyya.org

3. Qur'an 3:103. All translations from the Qur'an are personal translations with consistent reference to and incorporation of the following translators' editions: Amatul Rahman Omar, Abdul Haleem, Sahih International, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, and Dr. Mustafa

In 1923, while still a doctoral student, Marcus was hired by the Ahmadi Muslim community in Berlin as editor of all its German-language publications. After two years in this role, Marcus converted to Islam in 1925 and adopted the name Hamid. The Ahmadi community of Berlin constructed the first mosque in the city, known as the Berlin Mosque, between 1923-1926 in Wilmersdorf. Despite his conversion to Islam, Marcus maintained ties to the Jewish community, as well as with his friends working for gay rights. Marcus was the chief editor and contributor to the Berlin Mosque's primary magazine, the *Moslemische Revue*, as well as the editor for the Ahmadi German Qur'an translation and commentary that was published in 1939. He later became the chairman of the associated German Muslim Society from 1930 to 1935 and was a prominent lecturer during various programs held at the mosque that were open to the public. Foremost among these were "Islam Evenings," which served not only as eclectic educational spaces for attendees but also would later serve as the intersection point for the very same imam, Catholic priest, and Protestant layperson who would advocate for Marcus' release. The community of Muslims at the Berlin Mosque and the Ahmadi mission stressed interreligious tolerance, the unity of humanity, and the commonality of the God of Abraham. In this way, the community educated many and won some converts, especially from the local Jewish community⁴. Despite his conversion to Islam, Marcus maintained ties to his former faith as well as with his friends working for gay rights, suggesting that he upheld and practiced these teachings on unity and commonality.

The Rise of Nazi Germany and Its Impact on the Muslim Community of Berlin

As the Nazis came to power in 1933, the Muslim community, like many others, was forced to react. The *Moslemische Revue* featured articles, arguing for similarities between Islam and Nazism. Among these so-called consonances was a low-grade antisemitism. Indeed, public tours of the mosque began to feature only positive things about the Nazis and Hitler. During this time, Marcus remained chairman of the German Muslim Society, resigning only in 1935. Despite mosque members joining the party, increased surveillance, and the subsequent enacting of the Nuremberg Laws, Baer notes how the mosque leadership still advocated that Marcus be a lecturer for the "Islam Evenings" program⁵. Although Marcus' public role and visibility in these positions with the community greatly diminished with the Nazis' rise to power, this situation raises questions: what can resistance look like in what appear to be zero-sum situations? Can those with complicity remain close to those they are officially supposed to hate?

It was not, however, just the Nazi authorities whom the German Muslim Society and members of the Berlin Mosque community had to accommodate. Other non-Ahmadi Muslims sought control over Germany's only mosque⁶. Among these included the Islamic Community of Berlin, a competing Sunni Muslim organization that was unapologetically pro-Nazi in its rhetoric and stances. To achieve their goal, they claimed that the Ahmadis were a "Jewish Communist organization," as well as British agents, and thus were "unworthy of any claim to the mosque"⁷. Ultimately, surveillance increased.

Matters became more complicated upon the departure of the mosque's founding imam, Sadr-ud-Din, whom Baer describes as "the architect of its tolerant interreligious and interracial message." Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah followed him in this role⁸. Though we may recognize his name as the leader of the interfaith coalition who went to Sachsenhausen to free Marcus, the situation is more complex. Apart from providing internal lectures and mosque tours which integrated praise for various points of "connection" with Nazi principles, Abdullah was

5. Marc David Baer, "Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus," *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 1 (January 2015): pp. 140-171, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/120.1.140>. pg. 160.

6. *Ibidem*.

7. *Ibidem*.

8. *Ibidem*, page. 162.



Photos from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp outside Berlin in Oranienburg. From top left going clockwise: main entrance and administrative building, foundation markers of former prisoner barracks, entrance gate to the camp reading "Work sets [you] free," photo of an aerial photograph taken of Sachsenhausen. Barrack 18 is to the right of the main entrance underneath the triangular boundaries of the original camp before additional barracks were made. Photo credit: Usama Malik

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6. *Ibidem*.

7. *Ibidem*.

Despite what the above might suggest about Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, his actions at Sachsenhausen—as well as his interactions with Hugo Marcus afterwards—show a complex man struggling in a difficult situation. The imam's helping to get the former editor and mosque chairman out along with the latter's continued trust in the former imply that relationships based on faith-based encounters can endure regardless of difficulties and differences.

Baer notes that a variety of factors could account for the imam's shift from pro-Nazi to something more ambivalent. The shock to the November 9 Pogrom—which left businesses and synagogues within view of the Berlin Mosque in flames—along with the incarceration of someone as influential and significant to the mosque's history and work as Hugo Marcus, may have facilitated his change in outlook¹³. Upon obtaining Marcus' release from Sachsenhausen, Abdullah helped personally advocate on behalf of, and assisted with a visa for, Marcus to British India, where the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement was headquartered and where Marcus was later personally invited to come and stay permanently.

This process, however, did not occur in a vacuum. Tensions began to rise as the nation not only inched closer to war and the Nazi regime ramped up its campaign of extermination. Thus, the Gestapo and Nazi police doubled down on their surveillance of the Berlin Mosque, the German Muslim Society, and Abdullah. To make matters even worse, other Islamic organizations like the Islam Institute spoke out in favor of the party, urging the authorities to delegitimize the Ahmadis by labeling the German Muslim Society an enemy of the Nazi state¹⁴. As bad as things were for the community, times were even tougher for Hugo Marcus, who, like other Jews in Germany at the time, was stripped of his passport, his assets and valuables, fingerprinted, and outwardly labeled Jude¹⁵. Despite these horrors, Marcus and Abdullah decided to remain in Berlin to finish editing the German translation and commentary of the Qur'an. Abdullah called Marcus' efforts on this project "indispensable"¹⁶. Marcus had work to do on behalf of his faith and his community, even as life became unbearable.

Finally in August 1939, the translation was published. Though not explicitly referred to by name in the foreword—likely due to police surveillance of the mosque—the text calls Marcus "a great German friend" whose "assistance was indispensable and invaluable," and whose "love of Islam is boundless." It even closes with a prayer: "may God bless and reward him"¹⁷. Marcus' contributions to the translation offer further insight to the resistance that the German Muslim Society employed at such a difficult time. For example, passages in the Qur'an and subsequent commentary emphasize religious tolerance, disdain for persecution, protecting houses of worship including synagogues, and stark warnings not to help oppressors, nor to obey nor blindly follow a Führer¹⁸.

With these lasting words in print, and with war imminent, Abdullah certified Marcus' good character, allowing him to leave Germany, though not for India but instead Switzerland. Old friends from "Islam Evenings," like Dr. Max Jordan, a Catholic journalist and advocate for gay rights, facilitated his entry. Upon Marcus' departure, Abdullah too was forced to leave after the outbreak of the war. Prior to pausing services at the mosque, one of the final sermons he delivered spoke unapologetically about the need to appreciate human diversity and to respect each other's differences. This message directly echoes invocations from both the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad with respect to a Muslim's obligation to uphold justice and combat injustice. Indeed, a tradition of the Prophet relates that when asked what was the best form of struggle or jihad, he responded, "A word of truth/justice to an oppressive/tyrannical authority"¹⁹. What Hugo Marcus contributed in translation, what Sheikh Abdullah spoke at the gates of Sachsenhausen, and what the sermon in December in 1939 were just that

12. Qur'an 93:1-7

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Hugo Marcus (center) in September 1930. Photo Credit: The Lahore Ahmadiyya Islamic Movement

Beyond the establishment of an ecumenical community, we should also recognize Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah himself and his friendship with Hugo Marcus. As the imam and leader of a minority religious institution and a community that was on the margins of German life, we can see that Imam Abdullah initially reacted in a way common across other religious communities. He made overtures to the Nazi authorities, even when the situation began to deteriorate for many at the mosque, including Hugo Marcus. We can make a variety of excuses for Abdullah: what he did was a survival strategy amidst increasing scrutiny and surveillance, doing what was best for the community as a whole. We can also look down from our position and say that he could and should have done more. Both can be true. These decisions, however, did not ultimately define who Abdullah was or who he chose to become when it mattered most. At a time when the Nazis ramped up their persecution of Jews, he stood by Hugo Marcus.

He did this even as his mosque faced animosity from other Muslims, an issue that continues for both the Ahmadiyya and other Muslim minority groups today. The inherent othering within the wider Muslim community, particularly among more fundamentalist Sunni groups and schools of thought are sometimes weaponized, particularly in countries such as Pakistan, where groups like Shia, Ismailis, and Ahmadis are sometimes considered "non-Muslims." In many religious communities in countries like the United States, there remains a distrust and a willingness to other groups based in deep-seated misunderstandings. The example of the Muslim community in Berlin at the height of these tensions should serve as a cautionary tale for all faiths. We must see that fear, mistrust, and hatred of the religious "other" can lead not only to compromising and contradicting core beliefs but can also harm and bring trauma for generations to come. Let us heed their lesson now to avoid going down such a path.

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We do not know what may have caused a shift for Abdullah. Whether it was the normalization of violent pogroms against Jewish people, their property, and their synagogues, or the imprisonment of a Jewish friend whom he had come to know as a brother in faith, he felt compelled to journey 40 kilometers from Wilmersdorf and Protestant to protest in the name of truth and not sufficient. Abdullah went a step further to do principles. He ensured Marcus would have a safe conditions in Germany. Eventually, Marcus did esc forced to return to the UK.

What matters above all, however, is that he made astutely writes, "When it mattered most [...] even helped contribute to the antisemitic atmosphere i attempt to annihilate the Jews of Europe, if only b "whoever saves a life, it will be as if they saved al and acted on them.

The stories and experiences of Hugo Marcus, his Mosque, and the wider community serve as timely world we live in today. They challenge us to go be another for our humanity, to reconcile our shortcomings, and to know that ultimately, we accountable for the decisions we make. As the fourth Caliph of Islam, Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib,



22. Marc David Baer, „Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus,” *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 1 (January 2015): pg. 140-171.

23. Qur'an 5:32

24. *Nahjul Balagha*, 53.

25. Marc David Baer, „Muslim Encounters with Nazism and the Holocaust: The Ahmadi of Berlin and Jewish Convert to Islam Hugo Marcus,” *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 1 (January 2015): pg. 140-171.

26. Qur'an 2:148.

THIS IS HOW THE PERMANENT EXHIBITION OF THE WARSAW GHETTO MUSEUM IS CREATED

The entire process of placing such a large object at the construction site was an extraordinary logistical challenge and required precise planning of the entire project, starting with transporting the wagon to the museum construction site, through proper preparation of the site, to installing and securing it.

Before it was placed in the museum, the railcar was restored and given a first stylization to make it look like it did during World War II. After the construction of the World War II museum is finished, the railcar will be given another stylization, this time in the enclosed space of the building.

The permanent exhibition, which is currently being prepared, will be divided into nine galleries and spread over seven floors in the revitalized former Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital. The wagon will be located in the Großaktion Warschau 1942 gallery, which tells the story of the large-scale deportation of Jews to extermination camps. It was in freight wagons like this that the German Nazis transported people.

In creating each element of the permanent exhibition, we strive to describe the tragic events of more than eighty years ago, focusing on the voices of the victims, especially those who were neglected and forgotten after the war. These are the voices of women, children, refugees, displaced persons, and excluded groups. It is also the voices of religious Jews, whose experience, although it was the broadest experience of the Warsaw Ghetto, has been completely silenced and about which we know very little.

At the exhibition, we give them all a space so that their story is fully heard.

Implementation of the project "Renovation and extension of the historic buildings of the former Bersohn and Bauman Children's Hospital at ul. Sienna 60/Śliska 51 in Warsaw, including their adaptation for exhibition and educational purposes and the construction of the Media Library – part of the permanent exhibition of the Museum of the Warsaw Ghetto" is possible thanks to funding from the European Funds for Infrastructure, Climate and Environment 2021-2027 (EFICE) program. The amount of funding from the European Regional Development Fund is PLN 57,423,828.88.

The total value of the project is PLN 323,879,688.83.



ISRAEL TAKES OVER IHRA PRESIDENCY FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

At the beginning of March Israel assumed the Presidency of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) from the United Kingdom. Dani Dayan, Chairman of Yad Vashem, is the IHRA Chair during the Israeli Presidency.

The Israeli Presidency follows the successful UK Presidency, which under the motto of "In Plain Sight" saw the adoption of key IHRA resources like the Recommendations on Teaching and Learning about the Genocide of the Roma, initiatives like "My Hometown" which asked young people to research what happened in their towns during the Holocaust, and a report to take stock of the successes and challenges 25 years after the adoption of the Stockholm Declaration.

At the handover ceremony in Jerusalem, outgoing IHRA Chair Lord Eric Pickles said, "The aim of the UK IHRA Presidency was to bring out the best in the IHRA, engender confidence in difficult times, and, above all, strengthen the organization. Those of us who attended the poignant 80th anniversary ceremony at Auschwitz-Birkenau in January know that we will never see the like again. Ten years from now, at the 90th anniversary, it is unlikely there will be Holocaust survivors to speak. We are now the custodians of their memory. We must remember and tell the truth."

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Lord Eric Pickles, outgoing IHRA Chair

Israel's Presidency will be guided by the theme Crossroads of Generations, emphasizing the passing of the torch of Holocaust remembrance from the survivors to future generations.

Addressing the audience at the handover ceremony, incoming IHRA Chair Dani Dayan stated: "We are at a crossroads of generations, and the responsibility of preserving the memory and sharing the stories of the Holocaust will soon rest solely on our shoulders. The voices of the victims and survivors demand that we honor their legacy by standing firm against Holocaust denial, distortion, and hatred. In a world witnessing a dramatic rise in antisemitism and grappling with the challenges and opportunities of emerging technologies, our obligation to historical truth has never been more critical.

Our Presidency aims to lead in leveraging the IHRA's accomplishments, expertise and potential for the effective enhancement of Holocaust remembrance worldwide."

The handover ceremony included a video address by Shoah survivor Arnold Clevs. Born in 1933 in Kovno, Lithuania, Arnold survived 11 concentration camps during the Holocaust and later emigrated to the United States. He has

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INTERNATIONAL
**HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE**
ALLIANCE

**Crossroads of
Generations**

NEW EXHIBITION “SPACES OF THE HOLOCAUST”

We proudly announce that an exhibition developed by the State Museum at Majdanek is for the first time presented to the audience in the Netherlands. The project entitled “Spaces of the Holocaust: Majdanek, Betžec, Sobibór” launches at the Kamp Westerbork Memorial, where all visitors can see an exhibition displayed under the same title.

Spaces of the Holocaust is an exhibition that describes the history of Majdanek, Betžec, and Sobibór – three German Nazi camps that operated in the Lublin District during World War II. As centres of immediate extermination of Jews, they were a vital part of the so-called “Final Solution to the Jewish question.” That history’s largest genocide is today known as the Holocaust.

Although it is the Holocaust topic that dominates in the exhibition’s content – as the dimension that connects the three eponymous sites – its scope goes beyond that aspect. The authors also describe the broad and regional contexts for the persecution of Jews in occupied Poland, the role of Lublin in the German terror policies, as well as the fates of Poles that were imprisoned at Majdanek. Each section devoted to one of the three sites is also extended with a part devoted to the memorials operating in their locations – their development and commemorative activities. Today they all operate under the auspices of the State Museum at Majdanek.



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As exhibition curators proclaim in its introduction:

German-occupied Poland and particularly the Lublin District were the main theatre of the plans of exterminating the European Jews. Major camps, as well as ghettos established there during the war, were the sites of mass murder that later became known as the Holocaust. In 1944, the State Museum at Majdanek was created in 1944, the State Museum at Majdanek, Bełżec, and Sobibór. These three sites present context, but also historically as extermination sites. The exhibition Remembrance, which documents the history of the sites and protects the legacy of those sites – Spaces of

Exhibition developed by the State Museum at
Majdanek

Concept and curators: Łukasz Mrozik, Magdalena
Petruk

Language version: English-German

EXHIBITION BY MAŁGORZATA MIRGA-TAS AT THE KUNSTMUSEUM LUZERN

On 8 March, the exhibition "Overwhelming the World" was inaugurated at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, featuring a work from the MGW collection entitled "May" by Małgorzata Mirga-Tas.

The installation "Re-enchanting the World," first presented at the 59th Venice Biennale in 2022, addresses themes related to Roma history and culture. Twelve large-format textile pieces, each representing a month of the calendar year, draw inspiration from the Renaissance frescoes of the Schifanoia Palace in Ferrara. The artist reinterprets these frescoes by integrating aspects of Roma culture, thereby highlighting figures often overlooked in formal historical narratives. In her artwork, Małgorzata Mirga-Tas collaborates with women from the Roma community, utilising a variety of textiles such as tablecloths, curtains, bed linens, and clothing to construct impactful narratives. This approach not only highlights the daily experiences of the Roma, emphasising their cultural richness, but also seeks to combat prevalent stereotypes.

The artwork "May," part of the collection, portrays Cejla Stojka – a Roma activist, painter and singer, who is a former prisoner of Auschwitz and Krystyna Gil, a survivor of the Roma massacre in Szczyrowa. This piece invites contemplation on the potential for artistic expression to facilitate the processing of Holocaust trauma and examines the phenomenon of post-memory among the second and third generations of survivors.

Courtesy of the artist and the following Gallery in London, the Foksal Gallery International in Zurich, Bonnefanten the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, Kunsth Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst National Gallery of Art.

Małgorzata Mirga-Tas is a Polish-Romani visual artist, painter, sculptor, educator, and activist. She is the founding figure of the Romani Art movement and initiator of the international artist-in-residence programme "Jaw Dikh!".

In 2020, she was honoured with the Polityka Passport Award in the Visual Arts category.





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