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MEMORIA

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"PICTURE FROM AUSCHWITZ". DIGITAL REPLICATION OF THE HISTORICAL SITE CREATED FOR FILMMAKERS

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UNIFORMS, AND
NAZI
CONCENTRATION
CAMP BADGES
INSTEAD OF
MILITARY INSIGNIA

CENTERING ROMA

VOICES

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AUSCHWITZ" –
INTERNATIONAL
UNVEILING OF THE
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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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STRIPES INSTEAD OF UNIFORMS, AND NAZI CONCENTRATION CAMP BADGES INSTEAD OF MILITARY INSIGNIA

Both were deemed 'unworthy' victims of the Third Reich: branded as saboteurs by their compatriots for many years, they remain overlooked in Polish historiography because they were viewed as Nazi invaders.

In August 1942, a field court-martial under the Admiral of the Norwegian North Coast (Feldgericht des Admirals der Norwegischen Nordküste) passed judgment on 19-year-old Günther,

a member of the German Navy artillery unit stationed in Trondheim, Norway (Marine-Artillerie-Abteilung 506). He was sentenced to eight months in prison for failing to return from leave on time. During the investigation, it was revealed that he had engaged in sexual intercourse with a man shortly before beginning his service in the navy, at a time when he was not yet subject to military jurisdiction¹. In Germany, homosexual practices were criminalised under paragraph 175 of the Criminal Code. The court imposed this sentence to deter Günther from such "unnatural" behaviour².

Could Helwig Belzer's expulsion from the navy at the age of 22 be linked to his sexual relations with men? His nephew, Michael Luther, ponders this possibility in an email to me: "If that's true, it makes sense why my mother's side of the family has always said so little about Helwig. My mum once mentioned that she had never seen her brother with a girl³." Michael speculates that the pressure from their parents for Helwig to find a girlfriend might have pushed him to move out and enlist in the merchant navy. Unfortunately, we may never uncover the whole truth. Helwig's Kriegsmarine records—like those of Günther, who served in the artillery, including Marine-Flak-Abteilung 226—have not survived. The remaining document offers no evidence that Helwig faced punishment from military courts. While it is known that he was disciplined, the sources do not provide any details. In March 1942, he was assigned to an educational unit in Wittmund (30. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung), and by December of that year, he found himself in a penal company on the Eastern Front. In February 1943, this unit returned to the Hel Peninsula, along with Helwig. Just five months later, he was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to the Stutthof concentration camp. This marked the end of his military service, which had begun with his conscription in December 1940. Letters he wrote to his parents and sister reveal his reluctance to participate in the war initiated by Germany.

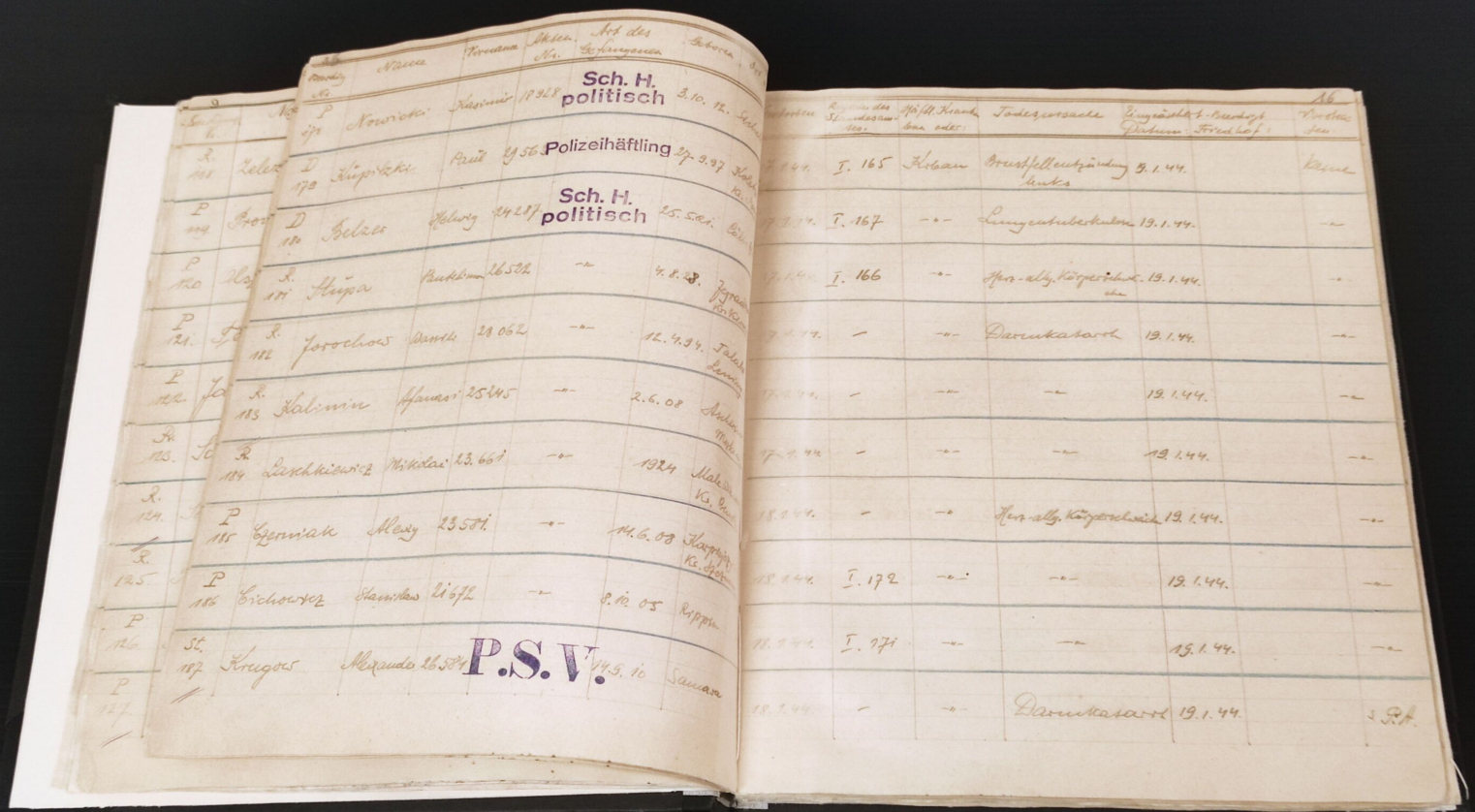
¹ Günther's fate, unless otherwise stated, is presented in the article based on: Copy of the verdict of the field court at the North Coast Admiralty in Norway dated 14.08.1942, Copies of notices from the military prisons Akershus, Anklam and Torgau-Brückenkopf from 16.10.1942 to 06.04.1943, Entries from the records of the German Post for Informing Relatives of the Fallen of the Former German Wehrmacht (Deutsche Dienststelle für die Benachrichtigung der Angehörigen von Gefallenen der ehemaligen deutschen Wehrmacht - WAdSt), Bundesarchiv - Abteilung Deutsches Reich in Berlin-Tegel, Marinepersonalunterlagen, PERS17/SPA-Sch/387, S., Günther, 20.12.1923, n.p. For more on the court proceedings see Bundesarchiv - Abteilung Militärarchiv in Freiburg, Verfahrensakten von Gerichten der Reichswehr und Wehrmacht, RM 123/84696. Günther's surname shortened to an initial. According to the provisions of the Federal Archives Act (Bundesarchivgesetz), it will not be possible to give his name in full until 2033 at the earliest.

² In the context of judgments handed down by the military jurisdiction, see e.g. G. Grau, *Homosexualität in der NS-Zeit. Dokumente einer Diskriminierung und Verfolgung*, ed. 2, Frankfurt am Main 2013. pp. 209-241; K.D. Spangenberg, *Wo ist Fritz? - Opfer des § 175 im Dritten Reich. Ein Beispiel für Militärjustiz und die Verfolgung Homosexueller in der Wehrmacht*, Marburg 2024.

³ Email from M. Luther to the author dated 11.04.2017 (author's own translation of the article). Further about Helwig, unless otherwise stated, based on: P. Chruścielski, *Disciplinary punishment of Kriegsmarine sailors in Stutthof concentration camp - SAW category prisoners, "Stutthof Muzeum Notebooks"* 2024, no. 12 (22), pp. 13-47. Information of a general or synthesising nature also comes from this study.



*John H. [unclear]
[unclear]*



The letters found in the family archive offer us a unique glimpse into Helwig's life, allowing us to understand him in a way that goes beyond the critical assessments and opinions of military commanders. In contrast, Günther is portrayed solely through official documents created by the authorities. At the time of his sentencing, he had disciplinary penalties on his record for misappropriation and for disobeying an order from a superior, leading him to spend nine days in

a high-security prison. We also learn that his performance in his duties was notably poor, and his conduct received a low rating. In its sentencing remarks, the court even suggested that the artilleryman seemed somewhat "limited". Was he perceived in this manner exclusively within the Navy? Could Günther's placement in juvenile detention—sometime after leaving music school unfinished but before his draft—have been for this reason? Regardless, it's clear that there was

a tendency among his commanders to use stigmatising language. Günther spent half of his sentence serving on the front lines in the USSR, particularly in a penal field unit (Feldstrafgefangenen-Abteilung 8) at a military prison (Wehrmachtsgefängnis) in Anklam⁴. In April 1943, he was transferred to an educational unit (31. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung) in Windau, which is now known as Windava in Latvia. A few months later, in August, he was moved to a penal and educational unit on Hel (Marinefeld-sonderkompanie, formerly Kriegssonderabteilung Ost). He likely faced further punishments there, though the specifics remain unclear. By February 1944, he was sent to Stutthof.

Unfortunately, Günther's records from KL Stutthof, like those of Helwig, have been lost, making it impossible to reconstruct the specifics of their time in the camp. Though Günther was sentenced under paragraph 175, this did not classify him as a conventional prisoner⁵; he

⁴ On the Wehrmacht soldiers punished for homosexual "fornication" in Anklam prison see, for example, H. Eberle, *Anklamer Häftlinge: Menschen im Wehrmachtstrafvollzug*, [in:] U. Baumann, H. Eberle, M. Koch, A. Wagner, *Das Wehrmachtgefängnis Anklam 1939-1945*, Schwerin 2021, pp. 97-150, here: pp. 121-124.

⁵ Cf. Paragraph 175 in the light of preserved documents of the Stutthof Concentration Camp, "Stutthof Muzeum Notebooks" 2017, no. 5 (15), pp. 11-32.

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Unfortunately, Günther's records from KL Stutthof, like those of Helwig, have been lost, making it impossible to reconstruct the specifics of their time in the camp. Though Günther was sentenced under paragraph 175, this did not classify him as a conventional prisoner⁵; he and Helwig had received a red triangle with the tip facing up a few months prior. In their case, the defining characteristic was "sabotage in the army" (Wehrdienst-sabotage). While homosexual contacts could meet this criterion, they didn't affect how ex-soldiers were categorised within the KL system. Prisoners categorised as "from the Wehrmacht" received the designation SAW (Sonderabteilung Wehrmacht, Sonderaktion Wehrmacht, or Schutzhaft: Aus [den Sonderabteilungen] der Wehrmacht). This label indicated that they had previously been in special, i.e., penal and educational, units; however, because they rejected the attempted "remedial" measures imposed on them, they ultimately ended up in a concentration camp. Most arrived at Stutthof from a special unit based on Hel. Regarded as "failures" within the German military, they faced unique harassment there and in the camp itself, as recounted by former Stutthof inmates: "There were »exercises« designed for former German sailors [...] sent to the camp for mutiny and for refusing to go to sea. These exercises were overseen by Blockführers [SS men responsible for prison blocks – note by P.C.]. They involved running in tight formation, falling, crawling, and performing jumping squats and were interspersed with mandatory marches, singing, etc. Beatings and kicks often accompanied the pace set verbally by the Blockführer. The duration of these exercises depended on how long the Blockführer could maintain his energy⁶."

Günther and Helwig likely participated in many such 'exercises,' whether in a penal company or at Stutthof. It is known that Günther worked in one of the transport commandos at the camp, while Helwig was frequently hospitalised in the prisoners' infirmary, where he ultimately died in January 1944⁷. The sailor's death deeply traumatised his loved ones, and the socio-political realities of the time prevented the family from openly remembering him. It was not until the

⁴ Account by H. Tempczyk, Stutthof Museum Archives [further: AMS], Accounts and Memories, vol. 1, pp. 218-371, here: p. 274.

⁵ AMS, Applications for prisoner bonuses, ref. I-IVB-3, k. 64; *ibid.*, Reports on the number of patients in the hospital and nursing staff. Name list of prisoners hospitalised and those who died in the hospital, ref. no. I-VB-5, k. 211; *ibid.*, Reports concerning prisoners who died in the hospital. Lists of names, ref. no. I-VB-7, k. 21; *ibid.*, Lists of names of prisoners discharged from hospital, ref. no. I-VB-22, k. 68, 80, 92, 109; *ibid.*, Name lists of prisoners discharged from hospital, ref. no. I-VB-23, k. 56.

⁶ WAsT letter to K. Luther née Belzer dated 11.05.2001; letter from the author to M. Luther dated 21.10.2016. Both documents in the collection of M. Luther.

"PICTURE FROM AUSCHWITZ" - A DIGITAL REPLICA OF THE HISTORICAL SITE CREATED FOR FILMMAKERS

The Auschwitz Memorial together with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation and leading figures from the European film industry, announced at Cannes Film Festival on 15 May the launch of Picture from Auschwitz — a pioneering project that will deliver an authentic 1:1 digital replica of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp available for filmmakers. Details

are available at film.auschwitz.org.

"Due to the solemnity of the site, as well as the preservation regulations, filming on the grounds of the Auschwitz Memorial is restricted to documentary productions. Yet the demand for feature films about Auschwitz has continued to grow, reflecting the public's deepening interest in the camp's tragic history. Such films should play a vital role in raising awareness and deepening emotional engagement with the history of Auschwitz and the Shoah," said dr Piotr M. A. Cywiński, the director of the Auschwitz Museum.

The new project harnesses cutting-edge 3D scanning technologies used by the expert team led by Maciej Żemojcin to preserve and protect the site's historical integrity, while offering filmmakers a revolutionary tool rooted in accuracy and ethical storytelling - the Auschwitz-Birkenau Virtual Film Location. Auschwitz-Birkenau Virtual Film Location is the only original and certified 1:1 digital representation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau I Camp, available under license for audiovisual projects. It is designed to support the telling of the true story of the camp, enabling its use in a wide range of films—from documentaries to large-scale Hollywood productions—without compromising the Memorial's historical integrity.

Filmmakers will gain access to a fully certified digital replica, ensuring accurate portrayals of the site. Every element of this space: starting from „Arbeit macht frei” gate, fence posts, buildings with every brick or roof tile is being meticulously documented, revealing perspectives and details invisible to the naked eye. This data will also be preserved and reprocessed over time as new technologies emerge, safeguarding the site's memory for future generations.

"Although I have devoted my professional career to photography rather than film, I have always been interested in special effects. That is why I am somewhat fascinated by the project of creating a virtual film set, a digital image of the historical site of Auschwitz, which will be made available to filmmakers," said Auschwitz Survivor and world-renowned photographer Ryszard Horowitz, who participated in a special discussion panel at Marché du Film in Cannes.

"I was only five years old when I was in the Birkenau camp. Fragments of those events have remained with me. It is obvious to me that everything that remains of the camp must be preserved for future generations. I think this new technology will make it easier to tell stories from Auschwitz, rooted in authenticity. I am very curious about the films that will be created using it. I greatly appreciate this project," he added.

"For a long time, the horror of Auschwitz and the Holocaust was a warning lesson, a vaccination for Europe. It also brought about significant changes, such as the creation of a new European identity. Yet, we need to allow new generations to confront the darkest moment in European history," said film director Agnieszka Holland, who joined the discussion online.



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CENTERING ROMA VOICES

How two museums are advancing remembrance of the genocide of the Roma through the IHRA Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Persecution and Genocide of the Roma during the Nazi Era.

For decades, the story of the genocide of the Roma during the Nazi era remained largely untold – neglected in classrooms, unacknowledged in memorials, and absent from public discourse. Earlier this year, the IHRA, in close collaboration with Roma civil society and experts, developed the Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Persecution and Genocide of the Roma during the Nazi Era to support more inclusive and accurate engagement with this history.

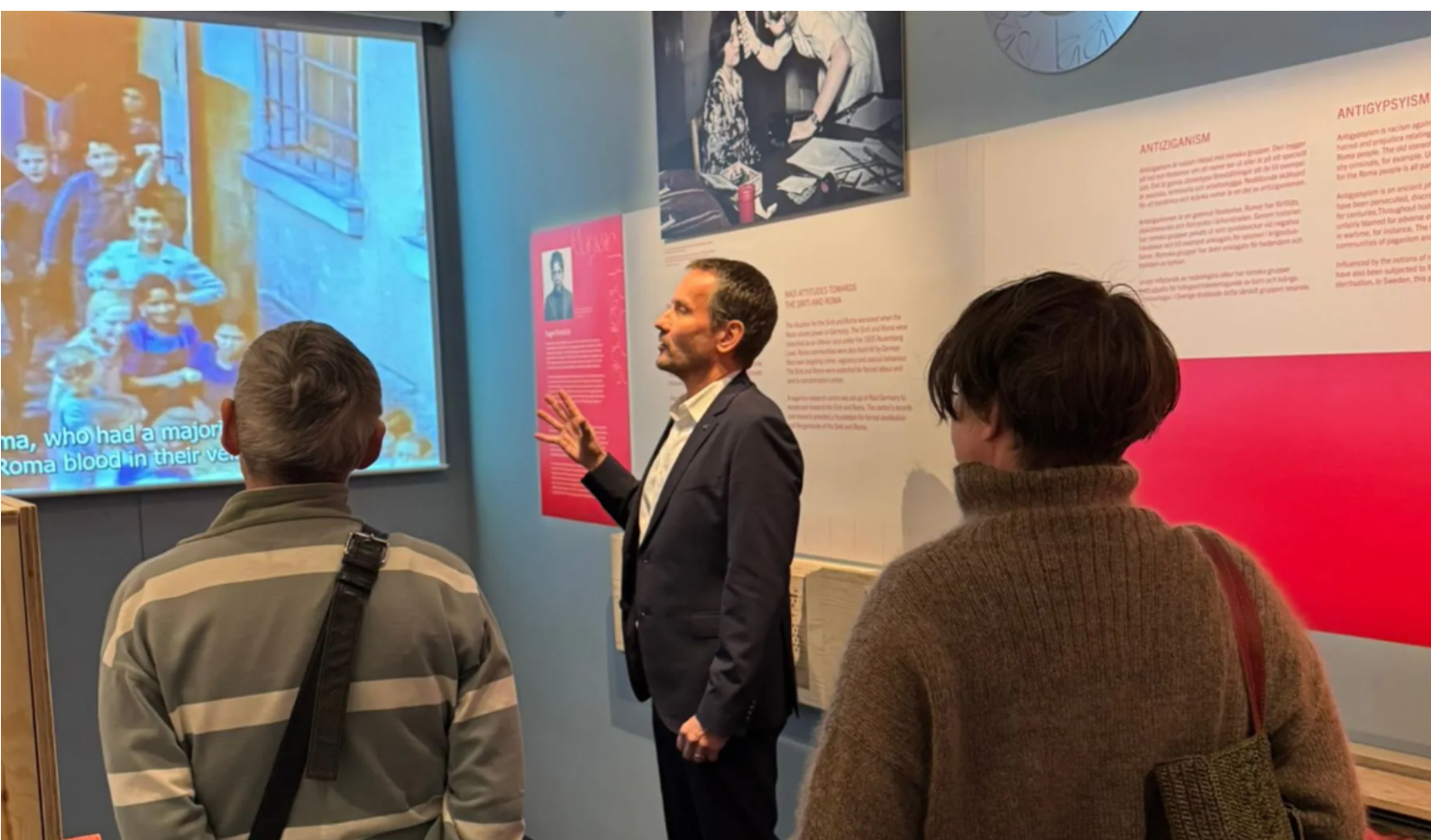
Now, museums from two IHRA Member Countries – the Camp Westerbork Memorial in the Netherlands and the Swedish Museum of the Holocaust – are helping those voices finally be heard. Though their approaches differ, both institutions are showing how the IHRA Recommendations can move beyond policy recommendations into meaningful, public-facing practice. In doing so, they are not only telling history – they are restoring voice, agency, and memory.

In May 2025, the Camp Westerbork Memorial will open a new three-room exhibition shaped by the IHRA Recommendations. Its purpose is clear: to present the history of the Roma not only as a story of persecution, but as a story of people – of lives lived, traditions carried, and memories preserved.

The exhibition brings together artworks by Roma artists, authentic objects, and multimedia material that foreground Roma voices. Interactive displays invite visitors to reflect on the atrocities of the past while also engaging with the resilience of survivors and their descendants. Importantly, the exhibition resists framing Roma solely as victims; instead, it emphasizes dignity, culture, and continuity – reflecting the IHRA’s call to approach teaching with empathy and nuance. Speaking on the role of the Recommendations in establishment of the exhibition, Bas Kortholt, Researcher at the Camp Westerbork Memorial, says, “The Recommendations were also of great value in writing the exhibition texts and creating digital personal stories that can be viewed and listened to in the exhibition. In that manner, the Recommendations functioned as both a reference work and handbook that we could constantly go back to.”

The exhibition also does not shy away from uncomfortable truths. Alongside the crimes of the Nazis, the exhibition directly addresses the role of Dutch citizens and institutions in facilitating deportations and repression.

The efforts at Westerbork extend far beyond the museum walls. In April 2025, the Memorial Centre led an online campaign for International Roma Day, in partnership with more than 20 institutions in the Netherlands and abroad – including the Anne Frank Foundation, the National Holocaust Museum, and the National Committee for 4 and 5 May. Using the shared hashtag #Romaday, the campaign highlighted Roma life before, during, and after the war.



Photos from the exhibition and workshop held at the Swedish Holocaust Museum



a clear home in their educational program. While the museum's exhibition Untold – dedicated to the genocide of the Roma and – was developed before the Recommendations were released, the accompanying school program for secondary students was explicitly shaped by their pedagogical framework. In particular, the program draws directly on the Recommendations' core questions: Why teach? What to teach? How to teach?

For the museum's educators, the answer begins with empathy. Personal testimony forms the heart of the school program, with life stories of Roma survivors who came to Sweden after the war. These stories allow students to move beyond statistics and engage with the lived experience of the genocide – a key principle of the Recommendations, which call for a dignity-focused approach rooted in individual voices.

Although it predates the IHRA Recommendations, the Untold exhibition aligns closely with their spirit. It aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the genocide of the Roma – tracing the roots of antigypsyism, the rise of racial biology, and the machinery of Nazi persecution, through to the long-delayed recognition of the genocide and the situation of Roma communities today. Many of the objects and testimonies included had never been exhibited before, and the exhibition's very title speaks to the invisibility and marginalization of this history. Personal stories, particularly from survivors who found refuge in Sweden, are used to provide historical context and emotional connection.

The museum also addresses one of the more complex educational challenges identified by the IHRA: how to speak about different genocides without reducing them to competitive narratives of suffering. In a country where the Holocaust is more widely taught, the program uses structural comparisons to help students understand how antisemitism and antigypsyism manifested in parallel – through racial laws, propaganda, forced deportations, and mass murder. The goal is not to equalize pain, but to expose patterns of exclusion and persecution.

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THE ARCHIVE MARKS A MAJOR MILESTONE IN HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AND REMEMBRANCE AMID RISING ANTISEMITISM

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Zane Buzby Holocaust Archive/Survivor Mitzvah Project are proud to announce that a groundbreaking and invaluable collection of handwritten documents and photographs dedicated to preserving the largely untold stories of Holocaust survivors in remote parts of Eastern Europe will become an important part of the Museum's ongoing commitment to build the collection of record on the Holocaust.

"In a time of rising antisemitism and Holocaust denial, and just as we are losing our best teachers — the survivors themselves — ensuring their stories are preserved and made available for historians, educators, students and the public is more important than ever," says James Gilmore, the Museum's oral history curator. "With its focus on the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, The Survivor Mitzvah Project will become a vital educational resource in the Museum's efforts to engage young people, promote critical thinking about how and why the Holocaust happened and counter Holocaust misinformation and denial."

The Survivor Mitzvah Project, an award-winning nonprofit founded by CNN Hero Zane Buzby, provides lifesaving support to Holocaust survivors in Eastern Europe while ensuring their stories are heard and remembered. Buzby, a veteran television and film comedy director with more than 200 episodes of network television to her credit, has dedicated more than two decades to documenting the horrific, though vital, history of "The Holocaust in the East"— the lesser-known yet crucial chapter of the Holocaust where about 2 million Jewish men, women and children were murdered.

The project was created from Buzby's personal journey and commitment to Holocaust education, beginning in 2001 when she traveled to Eastern Europe to trace her grandparents' roots. What she discovered was far greater than her family history — she uncovered extraordinary, untold stories of thousands of individuals and Jewish communities ravaged by the Holocaust. Says Buzby, "This trip left me with one foot in comedy and one foot in the Holocaust, and The Survivor Mitzvah Project was born."

The Zane Buzby Holocaust Archive/Survivor Mitzvah Project will become part of the Museum's permanent collection, which is stewarded by the Museum's David M. Rubenstein National Institute for Holocaust Documentation. The Survivor Mitzvah Project archive contains more than 40,000 handwritten pages of survivor testimony, as well as unique photographs and new data pertaining to those who were murdered or displaced during the Holocaust. "This archive affords people the opportunity to experience the whole essence of these individuals, their heartbreak, their humor, their surprising optimism, their abundance of kindness and compassion, and their deep desire to be part of creating a better world than the one they had been born

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"SPORTS AND SPORTSPEOPLE AT AUSCHWITZ"—INTERNATIONAL UNVEILING OF THE EXHIBITION AT KAZERNE DOSSIN

The Kazerne Dossin Memorial, Museum, and Documentation Centre in Mechelen is presenting an exhibition entitled "Sports and Sportspeople at KL Auschwitz." This is the first foreign instalment of the exhibition prepared by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

The topic of sports and athletes within the German Nazi concentration and extermination camps has, from its inception, garnered substantial attention from visitors, media, and cultural organisations. The exhibition inspired press publications and documentaries. In response to the considerable public interest in this aspect of the camp's history, the Museum produced a travelling exhibition in Polish and English for broader dissemination, details of which can be found at website.

A collaborative partnership with Kazerne Dossin was initiated following a visit to the Auschwitz Memorial by its CEO, Mr Tomas Baum, in November 2021, during which he was profoundly impressed by the exhibition. The director recognised the relevance of the topics, particularly in light of his institution's commitment to combating racism and anti-Semitism in sports. This inspiration led to the idea of adapting the exhibition for the Belgian audience.

As part of this cooperation, Dutch and French versions of the exhibition were created and customised for the exhibition space at Kazerne Dossin. The original script by curator Renata Koszyk was condensed to ensure an optimal narrative flow and an effective arrangement of visual materials in the exhibition area. Additionally, the exhibition was enhanced with stories of Jewish athletes who were deported from occupied Belgium to KL Auschwitz, including Salomon (Sama) Meljado, Simon Borisewitz, and Sally Wijnschenck.

A new feature of the exhibition is a replica of a camp chess set, which consists of 35 cardboard pieces adorned with hand-drawn chess figures. This set was discovered in March 2024 in block 8 of the former Auschwitz I camp while preparing for the New Main Exhibition.

The ceremonial opening of the exhibition in March 2025 was attended by the granddaughter of Salomon 'Sama' Meljado, a Belgian footballer who perished in Auschwitz, as well as Katarzyna Czortek, the granddaughter of Antoni Czortek, a multiple Polish boxing champion and national representative, among others, at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. The medal her grandfather won during a boxing match between Poland and Germany in 1938 is now on display at the exhibition, thanks to Katarzyna.

Renata Koszyk, the exhibition curator, was also present at the event. - The opportunity to showcase this exhibition in Belgium is a tremendous honour. The recognition from Kazerne Dossin means a lot to me. I receive numerous messages, including heartfelt notes from the athletes' families. These interactions not only expand my understanding but also assist me in preparing the publication I'm currently working on. Throughout this journey, I've felt immense support from ABSM, and I'm deeply grateful for that - she highlighted.



The topic of sports and athletes within the German Nazi concentration and extermination camps has, from its inception, garnered substantial attention from visitors, media, and cultural organisations. The exhibition inspired press publications and documentaries. In response to the considerable public interest in this aspect of the camp's history, the Museum produced a travelling exhibition in Polish and English for broader dissemination, details of which can be found at [website](#).

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As part of this cooperation, Dutch and French versions of the exhibition were created and customised for the exhibition space at Kazerne Dossin. The original script by curator Renata Koszyk was condensed to ensure an optimal narrative flow and an effective arrangement of visual materials in the exhibition area. Additionally, the exhibition was enhanced with stories of Jewish athletes who were deported from occupied Belgium to KL Auschwitz, including Salomon (Sama) Meljado, Simon Borisewitz, and Sally Wijnschenck.

POWER OF PLACE

The bus ride back from the Track 17 Memorial in Grunewald was quiet. The silence hung heavily, unusual for the group of outgoing Fellows. In my memory, the reaction to the memorial was unlike any of the other site visits, even to Auschwitz-Birkenau. At other memorial sites, my co-Fellows were easily able to react, discuss, and contemplate the ethical ramifications of the Holocaust. What accounts for the difference in our reactions to these sites? Why was this site distinct?

In this essay, I offer a perspective on the “power of place” in a program that seeks to provoke dialogue around ethics among junior professionals—FASPE. The program’s method immerses participants in the history and physical sites of Nazi Germany, sites key in the murder of millions of Jewish and other minoritized victims. In reflections on the program’s approach, participants often mention the “power of place.” Site visits are moving experiences; they move us to experience and reflect. There is power there, but the question is how they do so. The essentialist view suggests that something inheres in the physicality of memorials, that sites have power in an almost mystical way. The social constructivist view scoffs at this idea; little is done by merely putting people in places. People are not moved because they visit a memorial but because of how their immersion is guided and choreographed. How people are introduced to the site, which moments of historical significance are highlighted, how these experiences are arranged, and so on—all these shape how visitors understand a site, how the place moves those present. In technical parlance, it’s the process of interpretation that drives “power of place.” It is a social semiotic process of telling stories about the site from which the program derives its efficacy.

My training in architecture orients me toward a middle ground. Insofar as these places are products of design—that is, there was a call to shape the site and there were processes for determining how to shape it—there exists a specificity in how they affect participants beyond the stories told about them. This specificity is material, not metaphysical. Ambling in silence through the forest of concrete steles of Peter Eisenman’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe feels different than doing so down the platform of Track 17.

I suggest that attending to the “behind-the-scenes” social processes of design gives us a different way of accessing “power of place.” On the one hand, it offers us a way of understanding why sites impact visitors differently. On the other hand, exploring the dialectic of intention/effect opens new ethical grounds for reflecting on and in the Holocaust’s aftermath. In exploring three projects—Track 17, the Jewish Museum Berlin, and the unrealized first proposal for the Topography of Terror—against the architectural logics of the Final Solution, I argue that attending to the relationship between architectural intent and site experience not only enriches our ethical engagements with the history of the Holocaust but it also helps us to better understand (and feel) our specific ethical relations to this history and thus, to ethics in our own professions.

Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Architecture of Dehumanization

In *Auschwitz Bauleitung: Designing a Death Camp*, historian and director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum Piotr Cywiński describes the notorious site as a “machine of death,” a “well-organised, constantly expanded and redesigned, large-scale operation [that] encompassed the concepts of concentration and extermination with the industrial development of a frontline supply system as well as a model lifestyle amenities for SS personnel.”¹ The compendium of architectural drawings, ranging in scale from the reading lamp for the Reichsführer’s bed to the urban plan of the camp and entire zone of interest

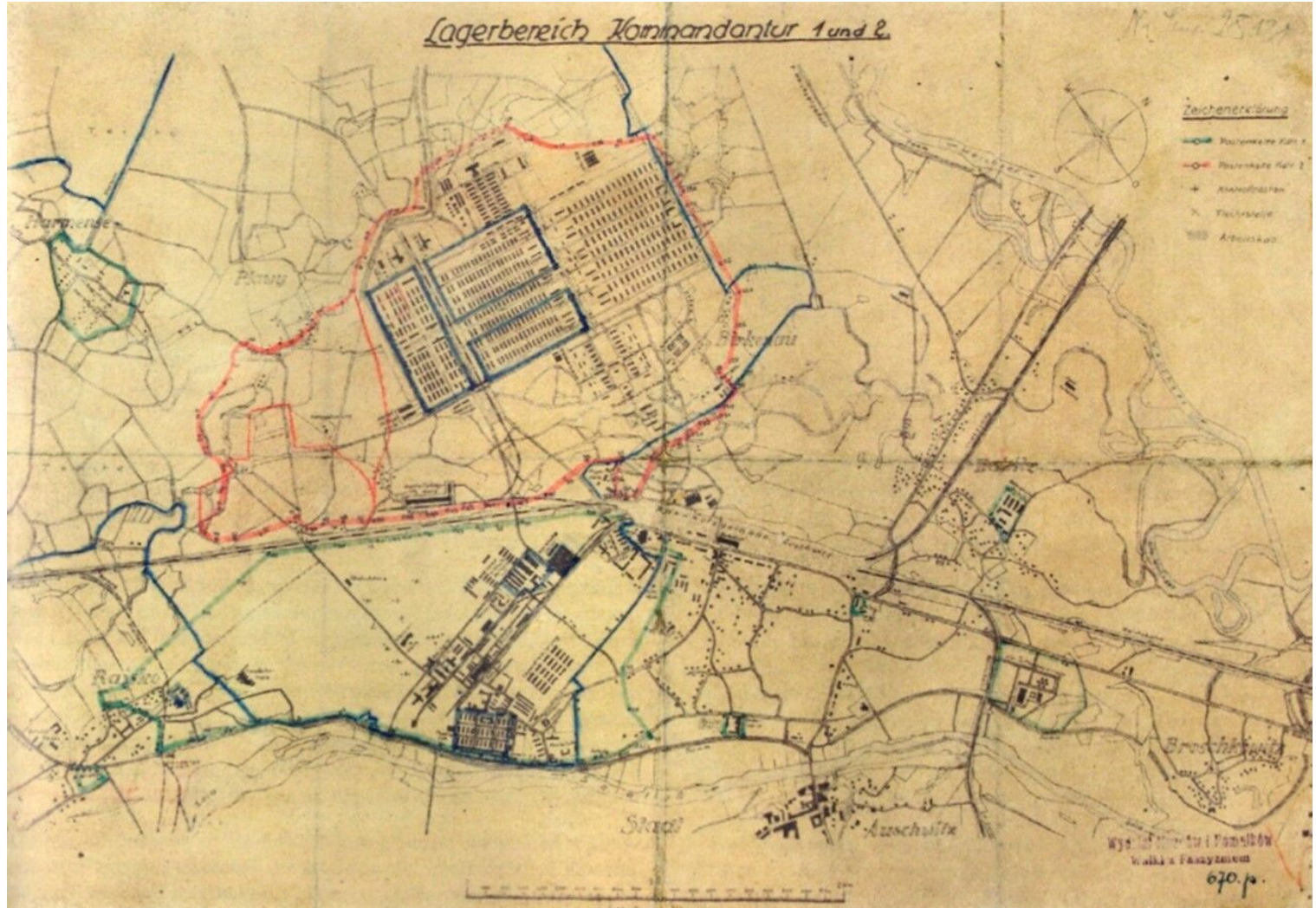


Fig. 1. Site plan of Auschwitz-Birkenau (Cywiński, p. 69)

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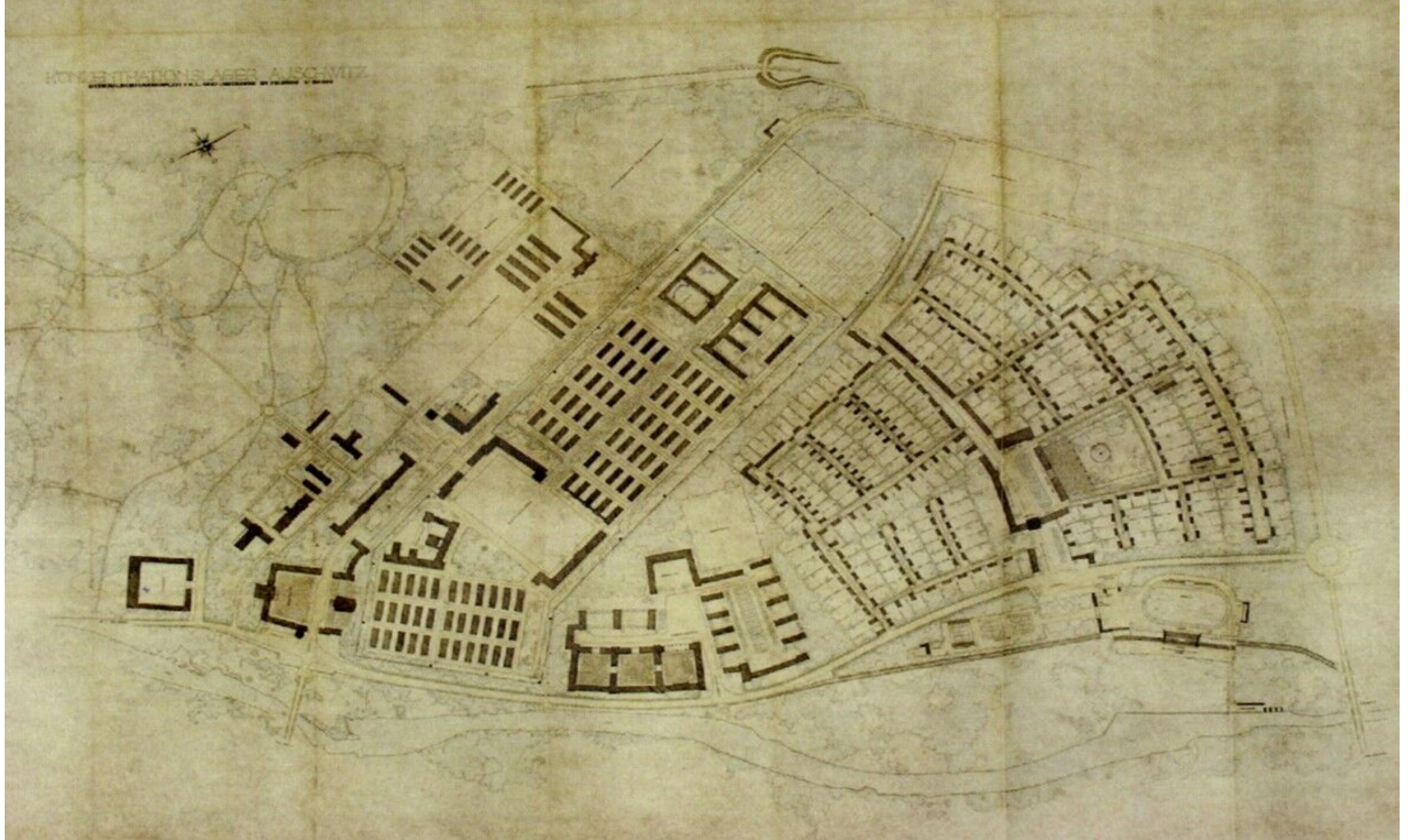
¹ Piotr M. A. Cywiński, *Auschwitz Bauleitung: Projektowanie Obozu Śmierci* (Oświęcim: Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2023), p. 7.

² Cywiński, p. 8.

³ Alexandra Minna Stern, “Cautions About Medicalized Dehumanization,” *AMA Journal of Ethics* 23, nr 1 (2021): E64-69.

⁴ Cywiński, str. 52.

⁵ Doris Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), p. 52.



the concentration camp barracks, crammed with square bunks measuring 1.9 x 2 meters. Someone has crossed out the initial occupancy estimate of 550 and has scrawled 744 in its place. The math strips away any sense of human identity and diversity: 62 masonry bunks with 4 prisoners on each of the three levels yields a total occupancy of 744 prisoners. These occupancy numbers were not respected in real life. More prisoners were crammed into these holding cells as the Nazi regime sped up its machine of death, shipping more Jews and other undesirables to the site to be eliminated.

Our visit to the bunks did not produce the expected response. Unlike the ruins of the crematoria or the exhibits of prisoner belongings, the barracks show little traces of human occupation. Visitors to the crematoria and the exhibits were visibly discomfited and distressed. Many shed tears, especially when they saw the hair cut from Jewish prisoners. Visitors to the barracks, by contrast, did not seem moved in the same way. We made small talk about the dark and cold interiors, trying to imagine what it would've been like to live in such a place. But the mundane architecture of the space made it difficult to resurrect such human connections. People moved quickly as if there was not much to see; the logic here is clear at a glance. These were spaces—cages—of temporary bodily occupation, and the strictly functional architecture reinforced the dehumanization of the intended occupants. Beyond stripping away material comforts and basic shelter, the seemingly endless uniform bunks also make it difficult for later generations to connect with the lives of those who once lived within these walls.

The architectural logics of these bunks remind me of the ships that transported enslaved Africans to the New World, as in Figure Five. The slave ship *Brookes* expresses these racialized spatial logics of dehumanization and concentration, perfecting them more than two centuries earlier. Every single inch contains human cargo. So too with the bunks at Birkenau. Viewers today, however, often miss the height of each bunk. Only about 2.7 feet of vertical space separates each "shelf" in the ship. The height of each bunk level at Birkenau is 75 centimeters or

⁶ Cywiński, p. 120.

⁷ Cywiński, p. 122.

the concentration camp barracks, crammed with square bunks measuring 1.9 x 2 meters. Someone has crossed out the initial occupancy estimate of 550 and has scrawled 744 in its place. The math strips away any sense of human identity and diversity: 62 masonry bunks with 4 prisoners on each of the three levels yields a total occupancy of 744 prisoners. These occupancy numbers were not respected in real life. More prisoners were crammed into these holding cells as the Nazi regime sped up its machine of death, shipping more Jews and other



⁸ Agamben, Giorgio, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Tłumaczył: Daniel Heller-Roazen, Wydanie 1 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).

Jewish Museum Berlin: An Ethical Architectural Response

If the spatial logic of Auschwitz-Birkenau announces the dehumanizing, destructive aims of Nazism, which architectural language constitutes an ethical response? Here, I think the Jewish-American architect Daniel Libeskind's 1988 winning competition design for the Jewish Museum Berlin is instructive. In reflecting on the building, Libeskind described it as "a structure with its own narrative," arguing that "the Jewish citizens of Berlin [...] were and are a vital, vibrant part of the city's fabric, their heritage woven throughout urban life. Their extermination during the Holocaust razed German culture—as if much of the preceding art, philosophy, music, and literature had been expunged from history. [He] believed it was possible to bring this erasure back to the public consciousness by designing a building that told the story."⁹ The building is a zig-zag structure clad in metal that abuts dynamically against the older Baroque building that houses the Berlin Museum, challenging the idea of order, as shown in Figure Six.

In contrast to the architectural logic of Birkenau, which is devoid of any sense of human story and vitality, the zig-zag form is informed by the stories of Berliners, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Libeskind plotted the addresses of Heinrich Kleist, Rachel Varnhagen, Walter Benjamin, E.T.A. Hoffman, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Arnold Schoenberg, and Paul Celan on a map,¹⁰ connecting where they once lived to form a Star of David which then informed "the organization of the museum and the slashes that cut through the building's façade."¹¹ Libeskind's competition-entry text reveals a desire to bring to the fore what has been erased: "the past fatality of the German-Jewish cultural relation in Berlin is enacted now in the realm of the invisible. It is this invisibility which must be brought to visibility in order to give rise to a new hope and to a shared inner vision. Thus [sic] this project seeks to reconnect Berlin to its



Fig. 6. Jewish Museum Berlin by Daniel Libeskind (Studio Daniel Libeskind, Creative Commons License)

⁹ Daniel Libeskind, *Edge of Order*. (New York: Clarkson Potter, 2018). p. 232.

¹⁰ Daniel Libeskind, "Between the Lines," *a+u Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 257 (1992): 82-83.

¹¹ Libeskind, *Edge of Order*. pp. 232-233.



Fig. 7. Jewish Museum Berlin interior (Nina Boshoven, Unsplash License)

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¹² Libeskind, a+u no. 257: 82.

¹³ Libeskind, "Between the Lines." str. 82-83.

¹⁴ Tamže str. 83.

¹⁵ Daniel Libeskind, *Breaking Ground*. (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004). str. 82.



Fig. 8. The Holocaust Tower in the Jewish Museum Berlin (Studio Daniel Libeskind, Creative Commons License)

For Libeskind, architecture is a tool that shapes a place's impact on the individual:

I had a passage that led to a dead end. I had a space, the Holocaust Tower, that got so dark you couldn't see your feet, and the only light filtering down came from a slit in the roof that was barely visible from below. I had a garden where the vegetation was out of reach, in forty-nine tall pillars overhead, and where the foundation was oddly tilted, making visitors feel disoriented, even seasick.

Note Libeskind's use of the word "feel." At the museum, engaging with the Holocaust and Jewish absence/presence in the city is more than a cognitive or even emotional exercise. The experience is proprioceptive, that is, you feel the movement of your body in the space, and in being so moved, you engage concretely with abstractions like culture and ethics. Libeskind recounted the experience of two Holocaust survivors to the Holocaust Tower:

As we entered, a heavy metal door swung shut with an unforgiving thud. It was winter, and the tower was unheated. From outside the tower [sic] you could hear children playing in the schoolyard across the street, trucks grinding past on Lindenstrasse, people talking on the museum grounds. Like Jewish Berliners during the war, we were all cut off from normal daily life. The two elderly women broke into tears. Berliners understood the building, deep in their hearts. They stood in the Holocaust Tower, silently, many with tears in their eyes [...] The building resonated with the people of Berlin.¹⁷

Shaping the built environment becomes another way to shape one's encounter with the past. This emotional effect reveals that such encounters in the museum are of an ethical nature, since

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 84.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 150.

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Shaping the built environment becomes another way to shape one's encounter with the past. This emotional effect reveals that such encounters in the museum are of an ethical nature, since one is moved to consider one's relationship to the historical trauma of the Holocaust. Libeskind's approach to formal language stands in stark contrast to the formal logic that underlies Birkenau:

There's a presumption [...] that right angles and repetition provides us with a necessary sense of order [...] The tyranny of the grid! I fight against it all the time: buildings designed like checkerboards, with repetitive units that march along the same track [...] The grid imposes an unnecessarily restrictive pattern on experience [...] Its clean right angles and geometric rigor feels [sic] scientific. But this is [...] outdated [...] It makes me think of German architects of the 1920s who wore white coats [...] as if they were involved in surgical operations [...] Even those of us who live fairly quiet lives don't experience ourselves as monolithic. So why settle for buildings based on a regimented formula that denies human desire and is antithetical to the quality of life?"¹⁸

It's interesting that Libeskind associates 1920s German architects with surgery, as it echoes Birkenau (even though designed by German architects of the 1940s) as kind of machine of death. The stated binaries—monolith/diversity, restriction/desire, and death/life—suggest an ethical dimension to these architectural forms. If the grid facilitates the dehumanization of Jewish prisoners at Birkenau, reducing people to numbers and bodies to be crammed into trains, barracks, and finally the death chamber, then the apparent chaos of the Jewish Museum Berlin is an essential rectification. It restores the diversity of humanity; it rebels against orderly tyranny. In a repressive milieu, the variety of spatial experiences reminds visitors of life beyond bare life. Unlike the functional barracks at Birkenau, Libeskind's museum opens up myriad interpretations, keeping people engaged with this history rather than neatly explaining it away as a singular, past event.

This approach is not necessarily reproducible. One cannot simply follow the same architectonic formula to recreate the same resonance with the past, move people to tears in the same way. What is important to me is that through engaging with the social processes of the building—in

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 124-125.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. Claudio Leoni, "Peter Zumthor's 'Topography of Terror'," *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (2014): 110-122.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 112.

²¹ Ibid., p. 112.

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Swiss architect Peter Zumthor won the 1993 competition for "Topography of Terror." His proposal was a slender "bar" that hovers directly over the basement archeological site. The building is constructed parallel to the dig site as opposed to the street, creating an angled effect.

The museum that currently sits on the site is the product of a second architectural competition hosted in 2005. Though construction began on Zumthor's proposal in 1997 and the concrete foundation and vertical egress were built soon after, a series of construction and funding difficulties led to the project's stagnation and eventual demolition in 2004.

Peter Zumthor's project description suggests a desire to create a careful relationship between the visitor and the site that is otherwise left alone:

On an urban site not rebuilt, on this significant gap, a building will be put up that leaves the ground as it was found and can itself be understood as part of this history. The wild weeds, the mound of earth, the excavated parts of buildings, the excavated and refilled remains of buildings, the natural earth, the mound of earth and debris—all these are elements of the history of the site [...] Posts—needles actually—stick into the ground [sic]. The site flows through them [...] The earth will not be sealed up by new coverings to create a new abstract museum level but remains "porous." Visitors walk on gravel or natural earth just as they now do. A site of remembrance. Nothing is symbolized²³.

THE WALLS OF THE "MUSEUM" ARE COMPRISED OF A DENSE SCREEN OF POSTS THROUGH WHICH LIGHT FLOWS. VISITORS MOVE IN AND OUT OF THIS FILIGREE SCREEN. HERE, THE POROUSNESS OF THE BUILDING ALLOWS VISITORS TO STEP ON THE GROUND OF THE SITE ITSELF, TO EXPERIENCE THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS (LITERALLY) OF HISTORY. ZUMTHOR CENTERS THE VISITOR'S EXPERIENCE IN LIGHT OF BOTH THE VICTIMS AND THE PERPETRATORS: "WHAT HAPPENED HERE [AT THE SS SITE], WHAT HAS COME DOWN TO US, SHOULD BE EXPERIENCED. IT SHOULD BE POINTED TO CLEARLY, OBJECTIVELY, BUT NOT BLOTTED OUT BY COMMENTARY, ARCHITECTURE, OR DIDACTIC MIS-EN-SCÈNE. THE FEELING FOR THE REALITY OF THIS SITE OF PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMS MUST REMAIN."²⁴ IT IS INTERESTING THAT HE NOTES THE PRIMACY OF THE



²² Peter Zumthor, "Topography of Terror, International Exhibition and Documentation Center," *a+u: Architecture and Urbanism*, nr 384 (2002): 86-93.

²³ *Ibid.*

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AT THE 'GROUND FLOOR' LEVEL, THE EXPERIENCE OF PLACE, PERCEIVED THROUGH THE SENSES, THE IMMEDIACY, PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ARE CENTRAL. A SPARTAN AND RETICENT AESTHETIC CREATING FACTUAL INTERRELATIONSHIPS AND STRENGTHENING THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SITE." THE NECESSITIES OF MUSEUM FUNCTION—EXHIBITS, ARCHIVAL SPACES, CAFES, PLACES WHERE VERBAL COMMENTARY ABOUT THE SITE, SS, AND THE HOLOCAUST IS MADE—LIVE ON THE SECOND AND THIRD FLOOR, AS SPACES OF "REFLECTION, SCIENCE, [AND] ABSTRACTION."

THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE BUILDING, "A TRANSPARENT STRUCTURE BUILT OF LIGHT AND SHADOW," ALLOWS VISITORS TO PEER IN AND OUT OF THE BUILDING, EXPERIENCING THE SITE FROM EVERY ANGLE. THE NET OF SLENDER POSTS, LIKE LIBESKIND'S ZIGZAG AND ANGULAR "CUT" AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM BERLIN, SEEKS TO CREATE DIFFERENT IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES AND THUS, DIFFERENT ORIENTATIONS TOWARDS HISTORY. THEY OFFER DIFFERENT ANSWERS TO THE ETHICAL QUESTION OF HOW ONE SHOULD EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGE WITH THE HISTORICAL WEIGHT OF THE MURDER OF MILLIONS OF JEWS. BUT SUCH ANSWERS ARE NOT DEFINITIVE: AT THE ARCHITECTURAL SCALE, VIEWERS CAN READ THESE SPACES, WALK THROUGH THEM IN UNEXPECTED WAYS, PRODUCING THEIR OWN ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION. ARCHITECTURE FOCUSES THE VIEWER'S EXPERIENCE: FROM ALTERNATIVES TO THE "TYRANNY" OF THE GRID AT THE JEWISH MUSEUM TO THE IMMEDIACY OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE AT THE TOPOGRAPHY OF TERROR.

THE CURRENT DESIGN FOR THE TOPOGRAPHY OF TERROR TAKES A MORE CONVENTIONAL APPROACH.

²³ Leonie, *grq*, s. 112.

²⁶ Nikolaus Hirsch, Wolfgang Lorch, i Andrea Wandel, "Permanence and Succession," w Gleis Track 17, ed. Nikolaus Hirsch, Wolfgang Lorch, Andrea Wandel (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009). p. 85.

²⁷ Ibid. p. 86.

parallel uses. Commuters from the wealthy suburb ride the S-Bahn to work. Others travel to the suburb to wander around the woods. High-speed trains rush by.

The architects wanted people to walk through the memorial: “In passing—that is, while walking—the chronology of a schedule is revealed whose coordinates are embedded on the platform.” The train station is a place of transition, and walking (and reading) places the participant in a dynamic relationship with the transport of Berlin’s Jews: “Applied to the question of the monument, perception is not really about an observer standing opposite a monumental object in order to view it in a state of stasis, but rather more about perceiving things in passing: literally, things directly associated with motion and walking”³⁰.

For such a small site, we FASPE Fellows were given a comparatively large amount of time to



²⁹Ibid., p. 85.

³⁰Primo Levi, *The Complete Works of Primo Levi*, ed. Ann Goldstein (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015).

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For such a small site, we FASPE Fellows were given a comparatively large amount of time to explore, to walk and observe each of the 186 cast iron plates, which gave us room to contemplate the ordinariness of the Holocaust. Rather than just reading about the transport, we were able to understand the movement of people through the movement of our bodies, experiencing the platform as a site of transition and movement. Walking creates a dynamic perceptual field, allowing us to imagine the movement of people to the camps. It was here that I began to feel what Zumthor's initial proposal sought to accomplish in centering the perceptual experience, in feeling the specificity of the site's history. The architecture formalizes a particular relationship to the site and thus, a particular perception of "power of place." The specificity of the site as a historical departure place for such transports is central to the experience. This project could not exist at just any train station, and here the architects differentiated themselves from Eisenman's memorial and its generic monumentality.

Perhaps because Grunewald was a site of ordinary living (a suburb much like the places where many Fellows grew up), it was much easier to feel one's complicity. I thought about the commuter train stations that I took to school and work and how ordinary those experiences were. It's not a true analogy, but it opens up the possibility for thinking about the banality of evil—to borrow from Hannah Arendt—that we might do in our everyday work (as physicians, as I was in the medical cohort) even if the ordinariness of it makes it feel normal. Compared to the crematoria at Birkenau, where its unfamiliarity makes it easy for us to other the evil that took place (and thus easier to renounce it), the familiarity of Track 17 opens up the difficult possibility that we are, or could be, that unethical. This is one approach to how I understand the silence on the bus back home after the visit to Track 17. On the one hand, we were able to proprioceptively experience "transport" and the weight of each one of the cast iron panels, which gave heft to the weightless data of train date, destination, and occupancy. On the other, the experience opened up a kind of vulnerability, a questioning of our comfort and sensibility. In the site's ordinariness, we could understand how easy it is for us to be slotted into either the victim or perpetrator categories. At an ordinary site, I was able to better appreciate what Primo Levi has termed the gray zone,³¹ the site where victims, collaborators, and perpetrators start to blend into one another. In walking the platform, we feel the pluripotency of our transformation into any one of these figures.

Architecture and "the Power of Place"

If the efforts of a Holocaust-centered culture of memory could have any effect, it would be to make understandable that, under certain circumstances, it is not only bad people who behave inhumanly, but good ones, too. That is the problem. Track 17 is neither located on the site of a former concentration camp, nor in an industrial zone. Instead, it is found in the middle of one of the most bourgeois, most saturated quarters of the capital³².

The quote above from cultural theorist and social psychologist Harald Welzer—from his

³¹ Harald Welzer, "Track 17, Did the Holocaust have an Audience?" in: *Gleis Track 17*, ed. Nikolaus Hirsch, Wolfgang Lorch, i Andrea Wandel (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009). p. 31-32.

³² Harald Welzer, "Track 17, Did the Holocaust have an Audience?" in: *Gleis Track 17*, ed. Nikolaus Hirsch, Wolfgang Lorch, and Andrea Wandel (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2009). p. 31-32.

YAHAD-IN UNUM ARCHIVES AT YAD VASHEM

Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, and Yahad – In Unum, a French humanitarian organization founded by Father Patrick Desbois, are pleased to announce that Yahad – In Unum will hand over its extensive archive documenting the history of mass murder sites of Jews in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, making it accessible to researchers and the general public.

Yahad – In Unum's archive, which contains two decades worth of on-site research, documents and eyewitness interviews, will join Yad Vashem's unparalleled collection of Holocaust-related materials and will expand on its long-standing Untold Stories research project that has gathered exhaustive information on the history of mass killing sites in areas of the Soviet Union. Entire families — grandparents, parents, and children — were often wiped out in a single day. They were murdered in forests, at Jewish cemeteries, in anti-tank trenches, on riverbanks, and in pits dug along the way.

The transfer of the archives has already begun, with the vision and support of long-time patrons Phil and Rose Friedman in honor of their parents, who were Holocaust survivors, and many family members who were murdered in the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem has made it a core mission to research this relatively understudied aspect of the Holocaust and has already investigated and uploaded to its website data on over 2,200 sites of mass killing of Jews by the Nazis, their allies, and local collaborators in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

Yahad - In Unum, which combines Hebrew and Latin words in the phrase 'Together in One', was founded in 2004 by Father Patrick Desbois, a Catholic priest, to investigate the horrifying history of the mass shooting of Jews, often at point-blank range, that Father Desbois refers to as the "Holocaust by bullets." Most shooting sites were located near towns and villages where Jews lived prior to the war.

For 20 years, Father Desbois and his team have collected corroborative evidence of the mass killings, interviewing more than 7,000 non-Jewish residents and identifying more than 3,000 mass killing sites. This material will be available to researchers and the general public in 2026. It will shed further light on the full scope of the atrocities and help preserve the testimonies of the last eyewitnesses that are vital for Holocaust research and education and an important pillar in exposing the appalling dangers of



UNVEILING OF THE MURAL AND OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION ON MIŁA STREET

On April 28, 2025, a ceremonial unveiling of a mural by Dariusz Paczkowski and Magdalena Czyżykiewicz-Janusz took place at 5 Miła Street in Warsaw. The mural commemorates members of the Jewish Combat Organization (ŻOB): Mordechai Anielewicz, Mira Fuchrer, Israel Chaim Wilner, Rachela Zylberberg, Lutek Rotblat, and Tosia Altman. The words of Chaim Wilner: 'We do not seek to save our lives. None of us will make it out alive. We want to save human dignity,' became a symbol of their resistance.

Students from Warsaw schools were involved in the creation of the mural – the Aleksander Fredro High School in Warsaw and the Wojciech Gerson State High School of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

On the same day, we also opened a new outdoor exhibition titled 'Miła,' prepared at the archaeological site at the intersection of Miła and Dubois Streets.

The exhibition is dedicated to the history of one of Warsaw's streets, which played a key role during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Despite its name evoking positive associations, Miła Street before World War II was considered one of the most neglected and dangerous streets in the so-called northern district of Warsaw. When the ghetto gates were closed on November 16, 1940, the street was within its boundaries. After the large liquidation action in the summer of 1942, the few Jews who remained in the district began creating shelters and hideouts. One of the most well-known was the one at 18 Miła Street. During the ghetto uprising, members of the Jewish Combat Organization came here, and on May 8, 1943, after being discovered by the Germans, they likely committed collective suicide in this bunker.

In the immediate vicinity of the memorial – the so-called Anielewicz's bunker – in the summer of 2022, the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, Christopher Newport University, and the Aleksander Gieysztor Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk (a branch of AFiB Vistula) conducted archaeological excavations. The excavated cellars, belonging to two 19th-century tenement houses, concealed many items that belonged to Jews who had lived in the Warsaw Ghetto.

We thank everyone who was with us – the youth, teachers, residents, and representatives of institutions – for helping us restore the memory of places that speak of the past but also have great significance today.

The mural was created as part of a collaboration between the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, the residents of the Miła 5 Housing Community, Concordia Property Management, and the company Masters Service, the distributor of AGS – Anti Graffiti System technology in Poland.



IHRA WARNS OF RISING ANTISEMITISM

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) is calling on governments and the public to recognise and take action against the unprecedented rise in antisemitism, as the world prepares to commemorate 80 years since Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) and the liberation of Nazi concentration camps.

This year's VE Day marks a historic milestone, commemorating eight decades since the end of the Second World War in Europe and honouring the victims and survivors of the Holocaust as well as the sacrifices of those who fought for freedom.

The IHRA is encouraging reflection on the revelations of the Holocaust and the genocide of the Roma committed by the Nazis and their collaborators that followed the end of the war. The liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau (27th January 1945), Theresienstadt (8th May 1945), Bergen-Belsen (15th April 1945), Buchenwald (11th April 1945), Stutthof (9th May 1945), and other Nazi camps exposed the full scale of the Holocaust, reminding the world of the devastating consequences of hatred, indoctrination, and indifference.

With antisemitic incidents on the rise worldwide, the IHRA warns of the dangers of allowing such hatred to go unchallenged and the serious repercussions when it becomes normalised within societies. Antisemitism not only impacts Jewish populations but attacks the very foundation of democratic and open societies. If hatred against Jews is tolerated, it signals that some groups can be excluded from the protection of democratic norms, undermining the entire system.

To combat antisemitism, the IHRA is urging individuals, civil society organisations and governments to work together to unequivocally denounce all incidents of antisemitism, advance Holocaust education, remembrance and research, and protect Jewish populations from discrimination.

Michaela Küchler, IHRA Secretary General, says:

"As nations celebrate VE Day 80 this May, we must also reflect on the horrific realities of the Holocaust. The liberation of camps like Bergen-Belsen and Theresienstadt revealed crimes so profound that they challenged the foundations of civilisation. 8th May is a day of remembrance. Commemorating the victims and the survivors must therefore remain an integral part of VE Day 80 to educate future generations about the dangers of hatred and prejudice.

"This is especially important at a time when we are seeing an unprecedented rise in antisemitism worldwide, with Jewish populations increasingly under threat both online and offline. As antisemitism moves closer to the mainstream, it is vital that we learn what history has shown us can happen when such hatred becomes normalised.

"As an international organisation dedicated to Holocaust education, remembrance, and research, we encourage governments and civil society to work together across borders to combat antisemitism at the source and to protect our democratic societies."



Excerpt from the 'Auschwitz Liberation Chronicle'.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Paweł Sawicki

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka

EDITED BY

Bartosz Bartyzel
Marek Lach
Łukasz Lipiński

CONTACT

memoria@auschwitz.org

