THE PLENARY SESSION
OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE

EXHIBITION: DORA: DISCOVERY & DESPAIR AT LOS ANGELES MUSEUM OF THE HOLOCAUST

REMEMBER THE CHILDREN: THE BULLENHUSER DAMM MEMORIA

NEW PUBLICATION OF ITS, USHMM & THE WIENER LIBRARY: "THE CAMP SYSTEM"

GLOBAL FORUM AGAINST THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE: YEREVAN 2018
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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.

Please do share information about this magazine with others, particularly via social media.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-chief

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In 2018, 2 million 152 thousand people from all over the world visited the sites of the former Auschwitz and Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp preserved by the Museum. It is about 50,000 more than in the record-breaking 2017.

As many as 80% of them got to know the history of the German Nazi camp with one of over 320 guides-educators of the Museum conducting guided tours in 20 languages.

"Such a high percentage of those who choose to learn the history of Auschwitz in guided groups is of great significance. It is the most valuable educational form, which does not only provide more in-depth knowledge and understanding but also allows visitors to engage in a dialogue and ask questions about selected aspects of this tragic history. No automatism, no printed form or electronic equipment can substitute this human interaction during the visit that is difficult, both in terms of the amount of factual information and emotions," said Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, the director of the Auschwitz Museum.

The top ten visiting countries include: Poland (405,000), Great Britain (281,000), USA (136,000), Italy (116,000), Spain (95,000), Germany (76,000), France (69,000), Israel (65,000), the Czech Republic (45,000) and Sweden (42,000). (42 tys.).
Like countless world-class pianists, Nelly Ben-Or began playing piano at the age of 5 and never stopped. However, Nelly risked all to play the piano. It helped her survive the Holocaust.

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Conservators at the Auschwitz Memorial are doing all they can to preserve artifacts left behind by those murdered at the camp in the Holocaust. Structures, too, need refurbishment. But the goal of authenticity is a difficult one to reach.

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REMEMBER THE CHILDREN:
THE BULLENHUSER DAMM MEMORIAL

The Neuengamme concentration camp was the largest concentration camp in Northwest Germany, with over 100,000 prisoners between the main camp and its over 85 satellite camps for men and women. At least 42,900 people died. At times, visitors find a memorial site of this size too colossal to comprehend; indeed, smaller memorials often seem to impact visitors more deeply. One such smaller site connected to Neuengamme is the Bullenhuser Damm Memorial.
Murder at Bullenhuser Damm

The murder of twenty Jewish children in the former school building located at Bullenhuser Damm street in Hamburg on 20 April 1945 is one of the many despicable crimes committed during Nazi reign. Aged between five and twelve, the twenty children, split evenly between boys and girls, were from Poland, France, Italy, Slovakia and the Netherlands.

Dragged from their homes and deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp, the children were then separated from their families and sent to the Neuengamme concentration camp in Hamburg to be subjected to medical experiments for five months. With the impending end of World War II, the medical experiments were concluded and the children sent to a former school at Bullenhuser Damm, used as a satellite camp of Neuengamme. In the basement, the SS murdered the children in an attempt to erase their crimes.

Medical Experiments in the Neuengamme Concentration Camp

Ordinary doctors used the opportunities afforded them by the Nazi tyranny to perform medical experiments on people who had been stripped of all basic human rights. SS Reich Leader Heinrich Himmler actively supported this kind of experimentation in the concentration camps. In June 1944, a special department was set up at the Neuengamme concentration camp to enable doctor Kurt Heißmeyer to experiment on prisoners.

Heißmeyer was looking for new treatment methods for Tuberculosis (TB), an infectious disease caused by bacteria. He assumed that TB, which mostly affects the lungs, could be cured by artificially creating a second centre for the infection in the body. At the time of his experiments, this theory had already been disproved by science. Heißmeyer also believed that “racially inferior” people were more susceptible to TB than “racially superior” people. In the course of his experiments, Heißmeyer infected up to 100 adult prisoners of Neuengamme concentration camp with highly virulent, i.e. infectious TB bacteria. Even though the health of his subjects had deteriorated considerably by the autumn of 1944 and most of them had even died from the experiments, Heißmeyer wrote to the Auschwitz concentration camp and asked for 20 children for more experiments.

The children arrived in Neuengamme on 28 November 1944, and a section of sick-bay IV was divided off to house them. The children were also injected with TB bacteria, either subcutaneously or directly into the lungs. They soon began to suffer from fever and coughing fits and became apathetic and weak. Although the children's presence at the camp was to be kept secret, many prisoners knew about them. They were forbidden to speak to the children under penalty of death. Late at night on 20 April 1945 a lorry from Neuengamme carrying the 20 children, their four carers and six Soviet prisoners arrived at Bullenhuser Damm.

The SS men first took the adult prisoners into the building and hung them in the boiler room adjacent to this room. The children were led down the stairs into the first basement room, where they had to undress. In another room SS doctor Alfred Trzebinski injected the children with morphine. Those children who still showed signs of life after the injections were hung by SS man Johann Frahm, probably with the help of other SS men, in the room at the very back of the basement.

Following these first murders, another group of Soviet prisoners were brought here from the Spaldingstraße satellite camp. SS men shot several of them who were trying to escape, but some of them also managed to get away. All other prisoners were also hung in the boiler room.

Remember the children

For decades, the story of the children was almost completely forgotten. It was only at the close of the 1970s when a journalist began searching for traces of these children and any relatives who survived the Shoah. Together with the childrens’ relatives and Hamburg locals, he founded an association.

In 1980, this association inaugurated a small memorial at the Bullenhuser Damm school and
ran it privately for almost 20 years before merging with the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial. Today, the memorial is one of Hamburg's most important commemorative sites.

In 2011, a new permanent exhibition opened in the Bullenhuser Damm Memorial. This bilingual exhibition is aimed particularly at young people, with a mission of ensuring that stories of the children are not forgotten. The exhibition therefore incorporates biographies within a central design element of a curved platform with 20 suitcases containing information on the lives of the children and their families. Photos solely displaying them during their period of experimentation represent the viewpoint of the perpetrators, who saw the children as objects. Instead, here we present the children in family photos not as victims, but as what they were: children.

The Story of Walter

Next to one symbolic suitcase in the exhibition, visitors can discover a stamp album which belonged to Walter Jungleib, one of the children murdered at Bullenhuser Damm. The story of this child, however, only emerged in 2015, when the memorial was finally able to locate Walter’s older sister, Grete Hamburg, née Jungleib. It was only then that Grete learned of her brother’s fate. In memoriam, she donated Walter’s stamp album to the site.

Walter was born on 12 August 1932 to a Jewish family in Hlohovec, Slovakia.

The family owned a jewellery business. Walter and Grete, only two years his senior, attended the local Jewish school. Walter was an avid stamp collector. With the onset of the war in Slovakia in 1942, life changed overnight for the Jungleib family. Forced to relocate several times, Grete, Walter and their family were finally arrested and deported to the Sered transit camp in 1944. Between 1941 and March 1945, 13,500 Jews were sent on deportation transports from Sered to Auschwitz.

The members of the Jungleib family were deported there in late October 1944. After a week in Auschwitz, the SS separated the women from the men and children. Along with 300 other women, Grete and her mother were taken to a Buchenwald satellite camp for women in Lippstadt, Westphalia. The father was transferred to the Mauthausen concentration camp and then to the Gusen satellite camp.
HIER STEHST DU
SCHWEIGEND
DOCH
WENN DU
DICH WENDEST
SCHWEIGE NICHT
He did not survive his imprisonment. Walter remained in Auschwitz until his transport with the other 19 children to Neuengamme.

Grete and her mother were liberated in early April 1945, and Walter remained unknown to his family in the Neuengamme concentration camp. When the family’s search for Walter in the immediate aftermath of the war yielded no results, they assumed he had died in the death marches from Auschwitz in fall 1945. All information that Hamburg residents had as to one Bullenhuser Damm victim was that he was a twelve-year-old boy by the possible name of “W. Junglieb”.

In 2015, the wife of Yitzhak Reichenbaum, whose brother Eduard was also murdered on Bullenhuser Damm, was reviewing papers received from the Auschwitz Memorial on the Reichenbaum family. Among these notes was a transport list for the prisoner train from Auschwitz to Lippstadt. On this list, she not only discovered the name of her husband’s mother but also two women named Jungleib: Grete and her mother. Reichenbaum managed to contact the Jungleib family through the Yad Vashem website, and it soon became clear that Walter Jungleib was in fact “W. Junglieb”, whose full identity had been unclear for all those years. Grete visited Germany and the Bullenhuser Damm Memorial for the first time in 2015 and later brought with her a gift: her brother’s stamp album. The only remaining keepsake of her brother. She powerfully remarked while presenting the donation to the memorial, “it now belongs here”.

The Memorial Today

The Bullenhuser Damm exhibition tells a number of stories, including biographies of the murdered children and adults, information on their persecution and deportation, background on the medical experiments at the Neuengamme concentration camp, and the history of the building itself as a satellite camp of Neuengamme. The exhibition also details what occurred 20 April 1945, when the children, their four nurses, and up to 30 Soviet concentration camp prisoners were murdered en masse in the basement.

There is also documentation on the prosecution of the perpetrators, the commemoration of the victims after 1945 and the development of the memorial itself. The basement rooms in which the murders were committed have been left empty. Quotes taken from statements made by the perpetrators during their trials in 1946 are written on the walls, illustrating where the murders took place.

With its wealth of information in panels, documents, photographs and interviews, the exhibition is designed to encourage exploratory learning. Materials for further reading as well as audio and video interviews allow visitors to explore the history of the site in great depth. Visitors are also invited to participate, with the ability to plant roses in memory of the victims in the memorial’s rose garden. Students can exhibit their own art projects on remembrance which they produce through project seminars at the memorial.

Currently a work by Daria Filippova is on display. She wants to express that a commemoration act should show that the tragedy of Bullenhuser Damm didn’t happen in vain but had an impact on the present: “Wandering among the images of the past, one is immersed in reflections on these events and then finds himself being an active participant of the "exhibition" (small mirrors), which means that he himself plays a significant role in the history as a whole and in commemoration of this particular tragedy. If noone remembers - the story is senseless. This art-object is to ask a person who he is and what his own history is, what he has done to prevent the cases of violence and to improve today’s world.”
VERWEIGERTE ERINNERUNG UND ERSTES GEDENKEN
DISPLACED MEMORIES AND FIRST COMMEMORATION

INTERNATIONALE ERINNERUNG
INTERNATIONAL COMMEMORATION

The fate of the 20 children is still kept in the minds of many people, even in wide coverage in the media.

In 1996 a plaque was erected in Naples, a town named after Sergio, in memory of the children who perished in the April 20, 1945 bombing.

In 2007 Commemorative exhibitions were held in Elblag, in memory of the children who perished in the April 20, 1945 bombing.

We can only show some of the materials here, but many more exist. The fate of the children is still kept in the minds of many people, even in wide coverage in the media.

GÜNTER SCHWARBERGS SPURENSUCHE
GÜNTER SCHWARBERG'S INVESTIGATIONS

Fotos Dokumente
und Zeitungsartikel

International commemoration

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Read more about Bullenhuser Damm:

• http://media.offenes-archiv.de/BullenhuserDammMemorial.pdf
• https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-neuengamme.de/en/exhibitions/bullenhuser-damm/
• http://www.kinder-vom-bullenhuser-damm.de/_english/index.php
• Iris Groschek / Kristina Vagt: „... dass du weißt, was hier passiert ist“. Medizinische Experimente im KZ Neuengamme und die Morde am Bullenhuser Damm, Bremen 2012

About the author:

Dr. Iris Groschek is currently working as the Public Relations Manager of the Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial. She is also the curator of the Bullenhuser Damm permanent exhibition.
A plenary session of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was held in the Italian city of Ferrara at the end of November. In Memoria, we publish the report by two Polish delegates: Alicja Białecka and Piotr Trojański, PhD.

The 20th anniversary of the International task force on cooperation in education, academic research and remembrance of the Holocaust, which was later transformed into the alliance called the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, is approaching.

A declaration defining the organisation’s scope of activities was signed in Stockholm, in January 2000. Currently, the IHRA comprises of 32 countries that have undertaken to comply with the provisions of the Stockholm Declaration, and through the activity of representatives of their governments and expert groups, support and promote educational and commemorative activities, as well as academic research on the subject of the Holocaust.

The expert working groups and committees function within the structure of the IHRA, undertaking substantive work in their thematic areas. Plenary sessions are also attended by diplomats who make binding decisions on behalf of their countries, as well as representatives of international partner organisations such as the UN, UNESCO, the European Union and the Council of Europe.
It is thanks to this that the IHRA has become a platform combining the efforts of politicians and experts to strengthen the moral commitment of modern societies to combat the growing wave of anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism and other hate ideologies, as well as to prevent negation and distortion of the history and memory of the Holocaust.

In the scope of genocide prevention, IHRA experts support decision-makers with their knowledge about early detection of manifestations allowing them to predict their occurrence, and educators in the creation and application of relevant curricula in practice.

The plenary sessions of the IHRA take place twice a year, and delegates are hosted by subsequent member states. The Polish term of presidency took place in 2005.

During this year’s Italian presidency, the spring session took place in Rome where a decision was taken to implement a new IHRA funding strategy for projects aimed at preserving historical evidence of the Holocaust and extermination of the Sinti and Roma, as well as to counteract the perversion of history. The debate during the meeting in Ferrara, primarily focused on modern political threats, including the growing wave of anti-Semitism and the role that IHRA has to play in counteracting this phenomenon.

Employees of the Auschwitz Museum have always been a part of the Polish delegation, which is appointed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They work with representatives of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Education, including experts from various museums and academic institutions: The Institute of National Remembrance, Jewish Historical Institute, Museum of the II World War, Warsaw Ghetto Museum, Pedagogical University of Cracow. The Museum employees are involved in the work of the committees and expert groups responsible for museums and memorials (Alicja Białecka presides over its sessions in this term of office) and education (Piotr Trojański presided over the sessions of the education group in 2014).
The areas of interest for the experts of the Museum and Memorials Working Group (MMWG) include authentic historical sites, museums and exhibitions related to the topic of the Holocaust. The group’s activities are particularly crucial in identifying sites, which for various reasons have been forgotten and physically degraded, or that are not commemorated in a dignified manner in accordance with the historical truth or provisions of the International Memorial Museums Charter.

For several years, the MMWG has recommended and monitored activities that should conform to the Charter, in such places as Staro Sajmište in Serbia, Komárom in Hungary, Lety in Pisek, in the Czech Republic, or Vilnius Ghetto Library in Lithuania. In the case of the latter two, the support of experts and the political recommendations of the IHRA lead to constructive solutions for the involvement as well as political and financial support of the Czech and Lithuania governments. In Vilnius, the deteriorating building of one of the city's three largest pre-war libraries was secured, which was the centre of cultural life in the ghetto and a meeting point for the resistance movement. In Lety, A post-war pig farm where pig breeding was carried out on a large scale was established on the site of the former Nazi German concentration camp for the Roma. After several years of efforts and consultations, the pig farm was removed, and activities were undertaken to secure the site and adequately commemorate the victims. As for the other sites within the scope of interest of the IHRA, negotiations and implementation process of expert recommendations are still ongoing.

The second thematic area of the MMWG is exhibitions and museums, both those established at former concentration camps and mass extermination centres, as well as those that were built or are being built in new buildings created or adapted specially for this purpose. Many of these initiatives are examples of good practices that serve as a model or benchmark for others, such as the exhibition “Auschwitz Not so long ago, not so far away”.

At the sessions of the MMWG concerns are also raised regarding problematic phenomena occurring in existing institutions, including countries of IHRA members.

In Ferrara, they also discussed cases of intentions that aroused concerns among experts, as to the preservation of the authenticity of historical sites, or controversies regarding historical narrative in planned museums and exhibitions. A representative of the Mauthausen Memorial was invited to the meeting in Ferrara to clarify issues of concern regarding the activities of the Austrian party on the site of the former camp, regarding interference with authentic historical tissue and access of visitors to the quarry. They also discussed the problem of providing decent care for the memorial in Gusen, and issues of a planned exhibition at the House of Fates Museum in Budapest, where, contrary to the opinions of historians and most of the Hungarian Jewish communities, the exhibition is to focus only on the fate of the individual without the historical context.

A vital aspect of the work of IHRA experts is the possibility of familiarising themselves with new initiatives - the projects of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, the Swedish Holocaust Museum and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre were presented in Ferrara. Visits are also planned to museums and places related to the subject of the Holocaust during subsequent presidencies in member states. This time, the delegates had the opportunity to participate in a curatorial tour of the newly created Museum of Italian Judaism and the Shoah, as well as the former of Fossoli Camp, from where Italian Jews, including Primo Levi, were deported to Auschwitz. We also acquainted ourselves with the complicated history of the former camp - initially, it was a POW camp for allied troops, then political opponents of the fascist regime were imprisoned there, and finally, a transit camp for Jews was organised in the barracks. After the war, various groups of refugees were placed in the post-camp barracks. Since 1996, measures have been taken to secure the remains of the former camp and transform it into a memorial. The visit to the Fossoli Camp was complemented by a tour of the
It should be emphasised that IHRA is an organisation that is evolving and closely monitoring the changes taking place in the surrounding reality. Over the years, the alliance’s strategic objectives have been modified, but always with the full approval of the member states. Initially, it was essential to reach the consciousness of the generation of that time with a message stemming from the experience of the Jewish Holocaust and the lessons from this tragic experience. Later, subsequent subjects were incorporated into the mission of the IHRA: The Roma and Sinti Holocaust, counteracting crimes of genocide, preventing acts of anti-Semitism and anti-Gypsyism, worthy commemoration of victims of the policies of the Third Reich, including non-Jews.

In the IHRA structure, the Education Working Group is not only the largest in terms of the number of members but also the oldest because it was created first. In addition to the debate on the dissemination of knowledge about the Holocaust, the meeting in Ferrara focused on two thematic areas.

The first concerned the internal project implemented by the IHRA, entitled “Educational Guidelines-update, implementation and communication”, which is intended to update the recommendations developed by the EWG regarding the objective, content and method of teaching about the Holocaust. The second on the other hand is a review of educational projects implemented in member states, which constituted a presentation of examples of good practice.

The update of current educational recommendations is aimed at integrating its content with the assumptions of the new IHRA Grand Strategy, as well as the implementation of its assumptions in the educational practice in the member states. There is also a need to clarify the terminology used in the new document, and also take into account the local context of teaching about the Holocaust in particular countries.

Two examples of good educational practice were presented within the scope of the second thematic area: the first of these was the possibility of using the video accounts of Survivors and witnesses in education about the Holocaust, while the second, mentioned above, concerned the international travelling exhibition entitled “Auschwitz. Not so long ago, not so far away”.
The video account project consists of a book entitled “Interactions. Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with Videotaped Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism” and an educational App for smartphones.

The book is the result of a conference held in 2017, in Vienna. It is the fourth volume of a series of publications entitled “Education with Testimonies”. The new volume includes a review of various concepts and examples from several countries of the world on the use of video accounts in school education. It also presents similar experiences applied in museums and memorials. A complement to the book is the German educational App titled “Fliehen vor dem Holocaust. Meine Begegnung mit Geflüchteten” (Fleeing the Holocaust. My encounter with refugees). It provides the possibility to “meet” with a survivor who attempted to escape persecution in Austria. The history of the witness has been linked to documents from the era and, is for use both in independent and classroom learning. The App was developed in 2017, as part of the Swiss IHRA presidency. For now, it is only available in the German version, but will eventually be available in French. The presentation of the book and mobile App aroused great interest and discussion on the of use of mobile devices in education about the Holocaust.

Another example of good educational practice was the travelling exhibition titled “Auschwitz Not so long ago, not so far away”. A similar presentation was shown to experts of the museums and memorials group at the May session of the IHRA in Rome. The exhibition began its international trip in December 2017 from Madrid, where it recorded considerable attendance - it was visited by half a million residents of the Spanish capital and the surrounding area, including numerous groups of school children. The exhibition was created thanks to the cooperation of the Spanish company - Musealia with several experts and institutions. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum was a significant partner of the project, both in the scope of the curatorial exhibition and the lending of items from the museum collections.
Paul Salmons, one of the curators of the exhibition presented the assumptions of the project and its implementation, in which he drew attention to the unique nature of the travelling exhibition highlighting its momentum and the vast number of original items presented. The exhibition covers an area of 2,500 sqm and contains over 600 artefacts, several of which have never been presented to the public. The majority comes from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, but there are also items and personal accounts from 20 other collections and institutions, including Yad Vashem and USHMM. Paul Salmons also drew attention to the tremendous interest the exhibition aroused in Madrid and presented plans for its presentation in the next 7 years. The emphasised that this success would not have been possible without the partnership with Auschwitz Museum. Appropriate conditions were provided for the items on exhibition in compliance with the Museum’s conservation requirements, thanks to which many original exhibits were presented. It is a certain semblance of the authenticity of Auschwitz, and therefore encourages further exploration of the subject and perhaps also motivates one to visit the Memorial.

Yessica San Roman, a member of the Spanish delegation to the IHRA, presented the method of promotion of the exhibition in Madrid and the results of the campaign.

The discussion emphasised the importance of organising such exhibitions to disseminate the memory of the Holocaust in the world, especially in countries that are remotely situated from the Auschwitz Memorial. Attention was paid to the title, which is thought-provoking, especially today, in the age of globalisation. It was underlined that international cooperation in the creation of the exhibition made it possible to present a broad perspective on Auschwitz – not only through the prism of its history, but also the broader context in which it functioned - not just as a symbol of the Holocaust, but the suffering of other groups of people. Questions were asked about the connection of the concept of the exhibition with the currently prepared main exhibition at the Museum. Hope was expressed that the concept and state of progress of work for its implementation would be presented at the next plenary session.

In March 2019, Italy will hand over the presidency of the IHRA to the next member state, which is Luxembourg. Thanking the Italian Presidency, we wish the Luxembourg Presidency a fruitful term. Furthermore, we convey our words of respect and appreciation to all those at the IHRA Permanent Office who on a daily basis ensure the continuity of the organisation’s activity and assist the diplomats and experts in their work!
On December 9-11, 2018, the 3rd Global Forum Against the Crime of Genocide was held in Yerevan. The Forum that was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia with the support of the UN Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect and in cooperation with the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) was dedicated to the prevention of the crime of genocide through education, culture and museums.

The 3rd Global Forum is Armenia’s contribution to the global action and efforts of the international community to prevent genocide and other mass atrocity crimes against humanity. The prevention agenda has been the foreign policy priority of Armenia since it regained its independence back in 1991. From 1998 onward Armenia has initiated numerous resolutions on genocide prevention adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Human Rights Council and the General Assembly. In 2015 Armenia led the global efforts to designate December 9 as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of Prevention of this Crime. The relevant resolution initiated by Armenia was unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Armenia, representing a state whose nation that has survived the Genocide, has always maintained its duty and obligation to actively contribute to advancing the global genocide prevention agenda. The theme of education and culture were chosen as the main themes of the Global Forum, since education has pivotal significance in effectively countering the gravest challenges that the humanity faces and is an essential pillar of the prevention efforts.

The Global Forum brought together representatives of the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as prominent experts in the field of genocide prevention and international criminal law from Germany, Poland, the United States, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Australia, Argentine, Japan, Canada, Bangladesh, and Rwanda.

The Plenary Session was dedicated to the 70th anniversaries of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The speakers focused on the background of the adoption of Genocide Convention, its role, steps undertaken in accordance to it, results and lessons learnt, as well as the supplementary roles of this two international tools in the context of protection of individuals and groups.

The panel discussions were centered on the issues of supporting genocide prevention through perpetuation of remembrance days of genocide victims, particularly, the role of genocide museums, memorial sites and institutes in the fight against the crime of genocide. The new approaches to education and art about genocide and its prevention, training projects and public education strategies, including the use of social media were the focus of attention of eminent trainers, media activists, leaders of NGOs and university
professors, who looked into how the education can best be leveraged to have a lasting effect on genocide prevention in the society.

The reflection on genocide requires, above all, a broad analysis of social, political and moral conditions that enable some ideologically incorporated group to gather the strength and tools to carry out their murderous visions. At the same time, thought should be given to the passivity of most people even against the most extreme events.

In the course of the conference, Dr. Piotr M.A. Cywiński called for conclusions to be drawn from the silence of the world against last year’s genocide, which occurred in Burma. In his opinion, the then mass murders fully exhausted both definitions of genocide adopted by the UN and Rafał Lemkin.

Meanwhile, the only thing the UN General Assembly could do was express grave concern over the reports flowing from there. Little more than that was the stir in the world media and the human society that was completely uninterested in it.

"Thus, the mechanism described by Pastor Niemoeller returned, who observed decades ago that “When they came for the communists, socialists, trade unionists, Jews, I did not speak out because I was not a communist, socialist, trade unionist or Jew. When they came for me, there was no one left to speak for me," Piotr Cywiński, said.

He also stated that without in-depth education curricula on extermination and other genocide in school programmes that is not just limited to history; it would be impossible to bring about significant changes in the response of the world, especially in the age of growing populism, demagogy and the return of various forms of xenophobia.
The Global Forum also addressed the issues of combating genocide denial and propaganda of xenophobia, discussed how genocide histories are erased from, trivialized and denied in textbooks and curricula across the world, how the narrative of denialism changes through time. Special attention was paid to making steps in raising awareness of younger generation on countering xenophobia, hate speech and intolerance, thus contributing to the preventing measures against the formation of genocidal environment.

The Global Forum also provided a good opportunity to present the activities of international organizations in raising awareness about genocides, as well as the efforts implemented in this regard by the civil society organizations.

As noted by Zohrab Mnatsakanyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia: “Manifestations of hate, extremism, racism, xenophobia and discrimination continue to shake the world, by primarily targeting national and ethnic minorities. Denial and impunity are the main obstacles to prevention. Denied justice continues to pursue generations of Genocide survivors and hinders real reconciliation. We know this from our own experience. The 70th anniversary of the Convention is an opportunity to once again turn the international community’s attention to the fight against genocide and the importance of prevention. Armenia has indeed been at the forefront of this undertaking... Armenia, as a country that has consistently pushed forward the genocide prevention agenda, including within the framework of the United Nations, has headed the call for the universal ratification of the Convention and, using a range of UN procedures, including the opportunity for universal periodic review, has raised this issue, inviting the attention of UN member states to the importance of this question.”

Sometimes called the first genocide of the twentieth century, the Armenian genocide refers to the physical annihilation of Armenian Christian people living in the Ottoman Empire from spring 1915 through autumn 1916. There were approximately 1.5 million Armenians living in the multiethnic Ottoman Empire in 1915. At least 664,000 and possibly as many as 1.2 million died during the genocide, either in massacres and individual killings, or from systematic ill treatment, exposure, and starvation.

The origin of the term genocide and its codification in international law have their roots in the mass murder of Armenians in 1915–16. Lawyer Raphael Lemkin, the coiner of the word and later its champion at the United Nations, repeatedly stated that early exposure to newspaper stories about Ottoman crimes against Armenians was key to his beliefs about the need for legal protection of groups (a core element in the UN Genocide Convention of 1948).

At the end of the conference a naming ceremony was held for one of the streets of Armenia’s capital, Erywań named after Rafał Lemkin.
In 1948, Soviet forces blasted shut the entrance to the tunnels in the obscure Mittelbau-Dora labor camp in central Germany, sealing the secret underground facilities for decades. Only after the reunification of Germany were the tunnels reopened and made accessible to the public for the first time.

In 1994, when Alvin Gilens, a veteran photographer of Holocaust memorials and sites, was invited to document the remains of the camp and factory at Dora, he discovered that the remains of the underground factory were intact, just as they had been left forty years earlier. “Photographing in complete darkness, walking on the rubble of the factory and amongst the spirits that inhabit the tunnels, is not like anything else that I have ever experienced,” said Gilens.

His interpretive photographs, which were first exhibited in 1995 at the Meyenberg Museum in Nordhausen, Germany, are now part of a temporary exhibit at Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, “Dora: Discovery and Despair,” through March 29, 2019.

Work on the Mittelbau-Dora camp began in 1943, when the Nazis, concerned about Allied air raids on industrial complexes in Germany, sent Buchenwald prisoners to a nearby gypsum mine to construct a large underground complex for the purpose of producing V-1 missiles and V-2 rockets.
Dora prisoners were forced to complete the back-breaking work of digging tunnels into the Harz mountains to house the large underground factories.

By October 1944, the SS made Dora an independent concentration camp with the aim of constructing and storing the so-called retaliation weapons.

Approximately 60,000 prisoners from over 40 countries were enslaved at Dora; over 20,000 of them succumbed to the inhumane conditions, slave labor, starvation, exhaustion and disease. The SS housed prisoners underground in enclosed and unstable tunnels, deprived of fresh air and daylight.

“Mittelbau-Dora was a slave labor camp where men lived and died under the harshest conditions in order to manufacture one of the world’s most advanced products - a rocket capable of incredible destruction,” Gilens explained.
The assembly hall at Dora tunnels. Photo: Alvin Gilens
During the last months of the war, the SS evacuated concentration camps in Eastern Europe, forcing prisoners on death marches to Dora and other camps in Germany. Conditions within the camp deteriorated dramatically due to the growing and weakened population. In April 1945, Dora and its sub-camps were evacuated, and most prisoners were sent on a death march to Bergen-Belsen, resulting in the death of thousands in the last weeks of the war. By the time United States forces liberated the camp on April 11, 1945, they found only a few hundred prisoners alive who had been left behind in the infirmary.

Many of the perpetrators involved with Dora were never held responsible for their horrid, murderous activities. The only engineer to stand trial, General Director Georg Rickhey, who oversaw production of the missiles and rockets, was acquitted. Key Nazi scientists involved with Dora, such as Wernher Von Braun and Walter Dornberger, were brought to the United States under a secret mission called “Operation Paperclip” to work on a variety of U.S. government programs.

“I hope visitors to the museum will understand that many of the Germans who oversaw that operation were never brought to justice, and were treated in the United States as heroes,” Gilens said.

In his evocative black and white photographs, Gilens said he tried to convey the destruction of the people who were forced to build the V-2 rockets, and a sense of memorial and recognition to those who died and those who survived.

In addition to Gilens’ photographs, the exhibit includes artifacts unearthed from the tunnels. The artifacts, which include a cup, bowl, spoons, cigarette holder and case, and a rusty infirmary kit, give glimpses into the lives of those who labored and died in the darkness of the tunnels.

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, the first survivor-founded Holocaust museum in the United States, is a primary source institution that commemorates those who perished, honors those who survived, and houses the precious artifacts that miraculously weathered the Holocaust. Since 1961, the Museum has provided free Holocaust education to students and visitors from across Los Angeles, the United States, and the world, fulfilling the mission of the founding Holocaust survivors to commemorate, educate and inspire. The Museum is open seven days a week and admission is always free.

100 The Grove Drive, Los Angeles, California 90036
www.lamoth.org
Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński, Director of the Auschwitz Museum, was bestowed the Legion of Honour, the highest French order of merit. The ceremony took place on January 17th at the Embassy of France in Warsaw.

While bestowing the award Pierre Lévy, the Ambassador of France in Poland, said: “You are a humanist whose voice is heard in France. You face difficult discussions concerning the issue of memory. You work tirelessly in favor of preserving the authenticity of testimony of the place to which growing numbers of visitors come every year. Last survivors are leaving us. Your mission has now become increasingly demanding, as the history is slowly fading away, when oblivion, ignorance, indifference or negation may prevail. Let us prevent the appearance of the intellectual void, where the evil hides”.

“Awarding you with the Legion of Honour has noble and beautiful significance. The French Republic fully identifies with your commitment. The fight against racism, antisemitism and xenophobia occupies a central place among the values that France follows, together with the fight for human rights and for Europe”, he emphasized.

In the special letter addressed to the participants of the ceremony of consigning the insignia of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour Jarosław Sellin, Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage, wrote: “Piotr Cywiński not only made it possible for two million people to visit the Museum every
year. He has also created the place considered by international experts as a model, respecting highest commemoration standards, expressing the rules of authenticity, preserving the integrality of artifacts and archive collections as well as international cooperation, according to best practices of UNESCO, which in 1979 inscribed Auschwitz-Birkenau on world heritage list”.

“Also thanks to the effort of Director Piotr Cywiński as well as the late Minister Tomasz Merta, in June 2007 UNESCO confirmed the wording of the Museum’s official name, matching the historical truth: Auschwitz-Birkenau. German Nazi concentration and extermination camp”, wrote Minister Sellin.

In his thank-you speech, Director Piotr Cywiński said: “The fact that this is a French order of merit is very important for me as France received me together with my family very friendly in the hard period of the 1980s, when the face of Europe was changing and the communism declining. Observing the collapse of communism from the perspective of such journals as Le Figaro or Le Monde constituted for me, a teenager at that time, a very
journals as Le Figaro or Le Monde constituted for me, a teenager at that time, a very important lesson, which I strongly appreciate after all those years”.

“This afternoon, France suggests us to add to the three fundamental values of the Republic: liberty, equality and fraternity, two principles of the Legion: honour and homeland. This suggestion matches current hard times”, he added.

Serge Klarsfeld, Vice President of Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah together with his wife Beate wrote that they were pleased that "outstanding merits of Piotr Cywiński were appreciated by France". Avner Shalev, Yad Vashem Director, emphasized that this distinction constitutes „the confirmation of deserved international status of the committed, talented and efficient leader in the field of the memory of Holocaust”, while Sara Bloomfield, Director of the Holocaust Museum in Washington emphasized that this award constitutes “a huge and fully deserved honour”

Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński spent part of his studies in France. Since 2011 he is the Member of the Board of the Maison d'Izieu Memorial. He took part in many conferences in France and is the author of several publications published in this country.

In 2018, over 69 thousand visitors came from France to the Auschwitz Memorial. France is also one of the state-donators of the Perpetual Capital of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, the
The purpose of which is to preserve the authenticity of the remnants of German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz. French support amounted to 5 million euros.

The Order of the Legion of Honour constitutes the highest French award of merit, established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte and awarded for merits to France, among others in the field of military activity, culture and science. Among the Poles awarded with the Legion of Honour there are for example Jacek Kuroń, Janina Ochojska, Andrzej Wajda, Andrzej Seweryn and Marek Edelman. In 2012 Jerzy Wróblewski, former long-term director of the Auschwitz Museum, became the Cavalier of the Legion of Honour. The order’s motto is Honneur et Patrie – Honour and Homeland.

Piotr Cywiński, Director of the Museum, was already awarded with numerous state distinctions. In 2006 he received from President Lech Kaczyński the Gold Cross of Merit, in 2008 Knight’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta and in 2010, Officer’s Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta.

In 2012 he was also awarded with the Knight’s Cross of the Belgian Order of the Crown, in 2013 - Knight’s Cross of the Monaco’s Order of Saint-Charles, while in 2014 the Officer’s Cross of the Greek Order of the Phoenix. In 2015 he was bestowed the Knight’s Cross of the French Order of Academic Palms.
THE CAMP SYSTEM

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), the International Tracing Service (ITS), and the Wiener Library are currently working in partnership to publish a series of primary source educational supplements based on documents from the ITS digital archives.

Containing archival documents, historical photographs, translations, and contextual materials, these thematically organized online publications have been designed to help students understand how scholars work with primary source evidence while promoting a greater awareness of the research potential within the ITS archival collections.
Although the origins of the ITS go back to World War II, the archives were unavailable for public research for over half a century. The Allied powers first created a central tracing office in early 1943 in order to trace and register people displaced by the war and Nazi persecution. For decades after World War II, the ITS was busy helping to locate missing individuals, to reunite separated families, and to provide people with the documentation necessary to receive assistance or reparations for their persecution.

After many years of pressure to open its collections to public research, copies of the ITS digital archives first became publicly available in November 2007 and are now accessible at several institutions around the world. Because these collections are so vast and have only been available for public research for a short time, scholars are still exploring the possibilities within the millions of documents in the ITS digital archives.

Designed primarily for the use of students in undergraduate university courses on the Holocaust, this new series of educational supplements contains documents from the archives of the ITS and photographs from the collections of USHMM and the Wiener Library. Translations have been provided where necessary, and each supplement contains an introductory essay by a scholar with expertise on the volume’s topic. Users are also given contextual information about each document, recommended reading lists, ideas for further research and discussion, and guidance for conducting research in the ITS digital archives.
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The second volume in this series, “The Camp System,” presents students with a range of documents from prisoner registration cards and forced labor invoices to postwar survivor testimonies and hand-drawn maps. An introductory essay by Geoffrey P. Megargee, the editor of USHMM’s multi-volume Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945, provides students with a contextual overview of the vast and sprawling network of concentration camps, forced labor camps, transit camps, and killing centers operated by Nazi Germany.

The documents and images presented in this volume include survivor accounts as well as official German records, illustrating several different aspects and experiences of the camp system.

For example, a list of symbols created in 1941 for the use of the Schreibstube (registration office) at Buchenwald reveals the hierarchical nature of the racial categories and prisoner classifications used by Nazi authorities. This extensive list of symbols divided camp inmates into many different prisoner groups. Such markings, used on camp documents and sewn onto inmates’ camp uniforms, made the reasons for an individual’s incarceration instantly identifiable to authorities and served to separate and divide prisoner populations from one another. Privileges, rations, and labor assignments all depended heavily on the category (or categories) to which an inmate had been assigned, and so the chances of surviving internment in the camp system could be drastically affected by such labels.

Many of these prisoner categories combined different classifications, and a full third of this list was devoted to possible ways to categorize Jewish inmates. At the top of this list, for example, lies the term “Politischer Jude” (“Political Jew”), reflecting the Nazi practice of targeting Jews as both political and racial enemies.

Postwar testimonies from camp survivors form a rich part of the ITS collections, and the accounts included in this educational supplement provide details of the camp system’s intersections of persecution, forced labor, and mass murder. Multiple survivor accounts explain how prisoners were forced to work constructing new satellite camps and making armaments for the German war effort. These testimonies contain details of the terrible living conditions to which camp authorities subjected prisoners and demonstrate how thoroughly camp inmates’ forced labor had become integrated into the German economy.

One survivor’s correspondence includes a hand-drawn map of the Gross-Rosen subcamp at Friedland and a list of his fellow prisoners, while another document from a survivor of Buchenwald contains an annotated sketch of a horse stable that had been converted by camp authorities into a mass execution facility camouflaged to look like medical examination rooms. Because many survivors wrote to ITS after the war in order to receive the necessary documentation to file for reparations, the ITS digital archives contain many valuable early testimonies such as this.

The next supplement in this series will be “Roma and Sinti in the Holocaust,” which will be followed by another volume focusing on the experiences of Displaced Persons (DPs).

“The Camp System” can be downloaded for free via this link.

The first volume in this series, “Women under Nazi Persecution,” can be downloaded for free via this link.

Volumes I and II of the Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933-1945 can be downloaded from the USHMM website for free via this link.
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AKTION REINHARDT AND AKTION ERNTEFEST

On November 3d and 4th 2018, the non-profit organization Mémoire d'Auschwitz - Auschwitz Foundation organized an international conference on Aktion Reinhardt and Aktion Erntefest at the Enabel Conference Centre in Brussels.
On November 3d and 4th, 1943, Aktion Erntefest, the "Harvest Festival", was ordained, marking the end of the action of extermination of the Jews of Poland, called Aktion Reinhardt. Under this hermetic name lie terrible mass killings: the "feast" of the harvest killed no less than 42,000 people (the largest mass slaughter of the Second World War) and was ordered by Heinrich Himmler to finish the Aktion Reinhardt, which saw about 1.7 million Jews perish in the gas chambers of Belżec, Sobibór, Treblinka and Majdanek. The Jews who "escaped" from the gas chambers were shot in Majdanek, Trawniki and Poniatowa on those two fateful days of November 3rd and 4th, 1943.

Exactly 75 years after the events, the conference organized by the non-profit organization Mémoire d'Auschwitz - Auschwitz Foundation, aimed to take stock of current research on Aktion Reinhardt, a historical fact that has seen a resurgence of interest among Holocaust historians over the last ten years, thanks, among other things, to archaeological advances at the various sites concerned. A long way has been covered since the pioneering work of Yithzak Arad, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps in 1987. The conference also wanted to come back to what happened with the direct witnesses (survivors of the extermination centers and executioners) after the Aktion Reinhardt was finalized. Finally, apart from the genocide of Polish Jews and Gypsies it represents, this action had a less well known economic purpose that remains to be highlighted.

On the first day of the conference, macro-history and historiography were in the spotlight with the intervention of Stephan Lehnstaedt from Touro College Berlin, who painted a picture of thirty years of research on Aktion Reinhardt. This research is proving to be crucial for the understanding of the Shoah as well as for the preservation of its memory beyond the disappearance of contemporaries. In addition, for the general public, Aktion Reinhardt remains in the shadows - omnipresent when it comes to the Shoah - of Auschwitz.

Geschichte und Landeskunde in Tübingen focused on the key role that the Führer's Private Chancellery played in the extermination process in the General Government. Recent research shows that this role is more important than previously assumed and that names such as August Dietrich Allers (1910 - 1975) deserve to be better known and studied, if only for the crucial role he played in Aktion T4.

Finally, the first day ended with an emphasis on two specific characters who contributed to the implementation of the Final Solution at their level. Michael Tregenza, an independent researcher residing in Poland for more than a quarter of a century, spoke of Christian Wirth's exceptional "career" (1885 - 1944), which ranged from the Stuttgart criminal police to forced "euthanasia" of German patients in the so-called T4 operation, to Lublin in occupied Poland, where he became the backbone of Aktion Reinhardt alongside Odilo Globocnik (1904 - 1945).

His journey ended in Trieste in 1944, shot dead by Italian partisans against whom he had been fighting fiercely since September 1943. Wirth alone sums up the extent and diversity of Nazi crimes and Michael Tregenza is preparing the first in-depth biography of this unknown character for 2019. Christophe Busch, the current director of the Kazerne Dossin Museum in Mechelen, then reframed from his perspective as a criminologist the role played by Karl-Friedrich Höcker (1911 - 2000) in Majdanek and Auschwitz.

The rediscovery in 2006 of the photo album that now bears his name has in a way "shone the spotlight" on this character who had built his defense on his relative invisibility. Christophe Busch was nevertheless able to find in the archives of the Majdanek Museum written proof that Höcker was indeed present on the scene during the huge massacre of 3 and 4 November 1943 as part of the Aktion Erntefest, something that Höcker had always fiercely denied during his lifetime and which saved him a heavier sentence than the four years of imprisonment to which he had been sentenced in Germany in 1989.

After this more general overview, Melanie Hembera of the Institut für donauschwäbische
The second day of the conference focused on Aktion Reinhardt and Aktion Erntefest from different perspectives. A historical framing of Aktion 1005 in the shadow of Aktion Erntefest was made by Berlin researcher Jens Hoffmann, referring to the example of the Waldlager Borek near the city of Chełm. Aktion 1005 aimed to dig up and burn the bodies of the victims of the Nazis and thereby erase the traces of their crimes. Begun in 1942, this action will continue until 1945.

Paradoxically, it was the compulsory work under Aktion 1005 that allowed Peter Sedgman (1917 - 2016) to escape the death that was normally destined for him in Aktion Erntefest. It was his grandson, Michael Evans, who came to talk about his grandfather's survival. Born Perez Szechtman in a Jewish family in Lublin, Peter Sedgman attended the Aktion Erntefest on November 3 and 4, 1943, without even knowing the name of this mass murder that would separate him from his brother. He managed to escape from the work commando that was supposed to dig up and burn the bodies and reach Italy after the war to finally start a new life in Australia. The testimony and "return to the roots" of his grandson, who was the first to notice the link between Peter Sedgman's story and Aktion Erntefest, was the human side of the conference and somehow symbolized the story of the victims and survivors of Aktion Reinhardt.

The Italian historian Tristano Matta, for his part, covered a less well-known section of the men who played the Sonderkommandos of Bełżec, Sobibór and Treblinka and who had often had a precedent in Aktion T4. With Aktion Erntefest marking the de facto end of their work, the men of Odilo Globocnik and Christain Wirth followed their leaders to Trieste in occupied Italy to fight the partisans under the name of Abteilung R and by taking their criminal methods there. La Risiera di San Sabba, the concentration camp set up in a former rice factory, became a symbol of Nazi cruelty that left its mark on generations of Italians.

The last speaker at the conference, the Dutch archaeologist Ivar Schute, presented the results of several seasons of excavations at the site of the former extermination centre in Sobibór. Being the most excavated of the three centres of the Aktion Reinhardt, some 100,000 artifacts have been found in the ground, which is a great paradox with the surface that seems so empty if we ignore the trees that cover the current site. Does Ivar Schute's question "Does archaeological research on extermination sites - and in the annex, concentration camps - lead to a new paradigm? "seems to be able to be answered in the positive.

In any case, archaeology provides answers to questions that neither witnesses (executioners or survivors) nor historians have been able to answer to date. Here too, political and religious imperatives weigh on scientific research. More importantly, the names of victims come back to light as the discoveries are made and thus extract these murdered people from the fateful place of oblivion in which they had been buried for decades.

To close the conference, the educational coordinator of the non-profit organization Mémoire d'Auschwitz - Auschwitz Foundation, Johan Puttemans, briefly presented the study trip proposed each summer to the Belgian public, to the places where the Nazi extermination centers were located in nowadays Poland. The trip proposes to follow the traces of the Shoah in the ancient ghettos from Warsaw, Łódź, Radom, Lubin, Zamość, Włodawa and Siedlce while visiting the places of memory that have become Chełmno, Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka and Majdanek. The survivors are symbolically present during the trip through their testimonies, which are red on the spot, the executioners, are put back into the historical context of the place of their misdeeds through photos and maps that are presented to the participants.

The interventions that were filmed will be available on the Auschwitz Foundation website (www.auschwitz.be) and a dossier will be devoted to the theme of the conference in the international scientific journal Testimony. Between history and memory.

Frédéric Crahay
Director of the non-profit organization Mémoire d'Auschwitz - Auschwitz Foundation