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USES RESCUED MATZEVOT — WITH TRANSLATION OF THEIR EPITAPHS

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BRUCHSTU CKE '45 ONLINE EXHIBITION IN THE 360° FORMAT

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN #PROTECTTHEFACTS

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ONE IN SIX MILLION

#ITSTARTEDWITHWORDS
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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All editions: memoria.auschwitz.org
Kansas City will be the second location in the United States to present the exhibition "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away." prepared by the Auschwitz Museum and the Spanish company Musealia. The official opening of the exhibition at the Bank of America Gallery at the Union Station will take place on 14 June, which in Poland is the National Day of Remembrance for the Victims of German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps.

"The exhibition will open on the 81st anniversary of the first transport of Poles to Auschwitz. It is very important. The exhibit previously presented in Madrid and New York shows the most difficult page in the book of human history," said Auschwitz Museum Director Dr. Piotr M. A. Cywiński.

"May this book teach us the correct and reasonable view, our own responsibility, the rational use of today's new forms of reaction because there is still too much antisemitism, racism, xenophobia. It is not a question about the world today. It is a question about us, about our possibility to react. The ability of each and every one of us," emphasized Piotr Cywiński.

"Union Station is Kansas City's visual voice and historic home. The exhibitions we host are vitally important in keeping our history and mission alive and our voice strong. Bringing 'Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.' to our vast and diverse communities is one of the highest honors we can imagine," said George Guastello, Union Station President & CEO.

"Hundreds of thousands of American military passed through Union Station on the way to the two World Wars. After the wars, we were the scene of countless reunions. And, in fact, after WWII, we helped welcome Holocaust survivors to their new homes, right here in the Midwest. Indeed, ours is a history filled with humility and honor," he added.

"As June 14th - the day of opening this exhibition - approaches, we are so gratified at the tremendous interest already expressed from supporters and ticket buyers. After a five-year journey with the tremendous producers and partners to make this a reality in Kansas City, we are well on our way to seeing a record-setting attendance and, more importantly, bringing the powerful and important message of Auschwitz to people from all over the United States and across generations," George Guastello said.

"Auschwitz did not start with gas chambers. Hatred does not happen overnight; it builds up slowly among people. It does so with words and thoughts, with small everyday acts, with prejudices. When we had the vision to create the exhibition, we conceived its narrative as an opportunity to understand better how such a place could come to exist, and as a warning of where hatred can take us to. Therefore, it is of vital importance to remember the road that led to Auschwitz and the consequences it had," said Luis Ferreiro, the director of Musealia.

The exhibition traces the development of Nazi ideology and tells the transformation of an ordinary Polish town of Oświęcim where during the occupation, the German Nazis created the largest concentration camp and extermination center—at which ca. 1 million Jews, and tens of thousands of others, were murdered.
Auschwitz
Not long ago. Not far away.
Victims included Polish political prisoners, Sinti and Roma, Soviet POWs, and other groups persecuted by Nazi ideology, such as: disabled, asocials, Jehovah's Witnesses or homosexuals. In addition, the exhibition contains artifacts that depict the world of the perpetrators—SS men who created and operated the largest of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camps.

On almost 2 thousand square meters the visitors of Union Station will be able to see hundreds of artifacts from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum including personal items—such as suitcases, eyeglasses, and shoes—that belonged to survivors and victims of Auschwitz. Other artifacts include concrete posts that were part of the fence of the Auschwitz camp; fragments of an original barrack for prisoners from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz camp; a desk and other possessions of the first and the longest serving Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss; a gas mask used by the SS; Pablo Picasso's Lithograph of Prisoner. An original German-made Model 2 freight wagon used for the deportation of Jews to the ghettos and extermination camps in occupied Poland will be placed in front of the Union Station building.

"These are unique fragments of history that have been painstakingly preserved for future generations, and that will be now displayed for
"These are unique fragments of history that have been painstakingly preserved for future generations, and that will be now displayed for the first time in the Midwest. This stop at Union Station will also become the last chance to experience the exhibition in the US before it returns to Europe," said Luis Ferreiro.

"Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away" was curated by an international panel of experts, including world-renowned scholars Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt, Dr. Michael Berenbaum, and Paul Salmons, in an unprecedented collaboration with historians and curators at the Research Center at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, led by Dr. Piotr Setkiewicz. The exhibition received the Grand Prix of the European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra 2020 Award, Europe's most prestigious heritage prize. The project also came second in the Public Choice Award.

Tickets to the exhibition
SIDDUR OF PASSERS-BY IN GORLICE USES RESCUED MATZEVOT — WITH TRANSLATION OF THEIR EPITAPHS

A prominent new Holocaust memorial in Gorlice, in southern Poland, is a pavilion-like building shaped like a Star of David that conserves numerous matzevot and fragments discovered at the site of a former Hasidic bet midrash in the city that was razed in 2016 — and, in a rare step, includes translations of many of the epitaphs.

Called “Sidur Przechodniów” (Siddur of Passers-by), the new monument stands outside the entrance to the Jewish cemetery and is the permanent centerpiece of a broader project on Jewish heritage and history in Gorlice, which saw outdoor cinema, online events, and street art — including rain-activated murals.

Called “Past/Future — Jewish History Saved,” the 360,000 złoty (€78,000) project was carried out by the city in partnership with the New York-based United Gorlice Society, with 105,000 złoty (€23,000) funding from the Polish Foreign Ministry.

The new monument has no roof, but its upper beams form a Star of David, making a striking view from above.

On its walls, matzevot that were discovered in the floor of the former Hasidic Besht bet midrash have been positioned. They had been conserved for years in the Jewish cemetery.

Many Holocaust memorials use rescued matzevot and fragments in their design.

In an unusual step, in Gorlice, a number of the matzevot that are displayed in the new monument include translations into Polish of their Hebrew epitaphs. This creates a means for today’s visitors to engage with the memorial and learn more about the Jews who before the Shoah made up nearly half of the city’s population.

Dating from the late 19th century, the Besht bet midrash had been devastated by the Nazis and then was taken over by local authorities after WW2 and turned into fire station; it later was abandoned and fell into ruin.

According to the city the matzevot and fragments were discovered during excavation there in 2015 before the building’s demolition; Virtual Shtetl reports that some were discovered in 2011. They were taken to the Jewish cemetery for storage.

The Jewish cemetery dates from around 1800 and is listed as a monument. Devastated in WW2, with matzevot removed and used for paving and construction, the cemetery, with around 500 conserved matzevot, is now fenced and well maintained. A new ohel of rabbis from the Halberstam dynasty was built in 2015-16.

The former late 19th century Great Synagogue still stands. It was devastated in WW2, was used as a warehouse after the war, and has been used as a bakery since the late 1960s. It bears a commemorative plaque on its outer wall.
All photos from municipality of Gorlice
On the occasion of the anniversary, the exhibition 45 FRAGMENTS dating back to the year 1945 was prepared, referring to 45 objects, left or carefully stored.

What do part of a map, a bomb splinter, prisoner’s clothing and a repurposed internal door have in common? Objects like these are FRAGMENTS from the year 1945. They were left or carefully preserved, and they all have stories to tell. With the help of those fragments, five memorials have curated the exhibition “FRAGMENTS ‘45” to give insights into a year of violence, liberations and disruptions in Brandenburg.

The year 1945 represents the transition from war to peace in Europe. It stands for a phase of decisive developments that begins already prior to 1945, continues long after and whose repercussions can still be felt today. The exhibition was originally designed to mark the 75th anniversary of liberation but could not be shown so far due to the pandemic. Thanks to funding from the federal “Neustart Kultur” programme of the Commissioner for Culture and the Media, it has now been possible to première the exhibition digitally. With the 360° online version of the exhibition, the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation provides multi-faceted insights into what happened in the region in this important year.

The 45 FRAGMENTS make history tangible almost in a literal sense: The concrete objects and stories present the diverse, often concurrent and partly even contradictory experiences of different people to visitors. The main focus of the exhibition is on what happens to concentration camp inmates and prisoners in Brandenburg in 1945 and how those persecuted by the NS regime are experiencing this period. Their experiences are inextricably linked to the other events taking place in the region at the same time.

The analogue exhibition presents all 45 FRAGMENTS in the House of Brandenburg-Prussian History from 7 May 2021 onwards. Eventually, each of the five memorials will display nine FRAGMENTS in smaller exhibitions, taking the objects back to the region. An educational programme accompanying the exhibition primarily addresses a local audience, reaching beyond towns and cities into rural regions. More information on the analogue exhibition and the flanking educational programme can be found HERE.
BRUCHSTÜCKE
VON NS-GEWALT, BEREHREN
UND UMBRÜCHEN IN BRANDENBURG
Europea Holocaust Research Infrastructure

EHRI IS LOOKING FOR MICRO-ARCHIVES

We invite you to become part of the EHRI network by integrating your micro-archival collection into our portal. Together, we can develop and apply strategies to safeguard your collection(s) for future generations and make them accessible to researchers and the public at large.

The sources that provide information on the Holocaust are diverse and geographically dispersed. Combined, all these collections – regardless of their scope and accessibility – are necessary to form a more complete picture. Whether a diary is located in a box in the attic of a small initiative or in the vast archives of an established institution is irrelevant: all sorts of objects and documents shed light not only on the Holocaust at large, but also on single events and personal stories.

Since its inception in 2010, EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure) has been enabling and encouraging scholarly research on the Holocaust along transnational lines. EHRI's focus has been to integrate archival descriptions from institutions all over the European continent, Israel and the United States. This resulted in the establishment of the EHRI Portal, which to date provides an integrated search across 325,474 archival descriptions from 761 institutions. EHRI has made great strides by working with large-scale institutions. Yet, we have always been aware that to cover the material legacy of the Holocaust, we need to incorporate the abundant material in smaller archival collections. Therefore, EHRI continues to broaden its scope. Starting this year, a major focus will be to create opportunities for cooperation with micro-archival entities and the integration of their collections to the research infrastructure. In what follows, we would like to introduce EHRI's new activities with regard to micro-archives and invite you to get in touch with us.

Micro-archives and EHRI

The interest in hidden archival collections outside larger institutions has grown steadily over the past years. Researchers are interested in discovering first-hand information that can shed new light on historical events. Moreover, holdings of smaller grassroots organisations or private initiatives can complement, refine and critically scrutinize specific narratives of the past. Hence, EHRI considers it essential to join forces and cooperate closely with micro-archives.

In the context of our project, a micro-archive is:

- an association, a memorial, a grassroots initiative, a very small archival institution, a researcher, a relative or a family;
- a private initiative that is not run by local authorities or by the state, but by non-professional curators, i.e. engaged researchers or lay persons (not archivists, librarians, curators or the like);
- not a recipient of any substantial support from public means.

Of course, the holdings of the micro-archives also need to be relevant to EHRI, for instance:

- lists, cards, files, interviews, photographs, films, or letters related to the Holocaust;
- collections assembled during the Holocaust and/or after liberation, also if recently;
- collections should not have been integrated into larger archives yet.
Micro-archival collections that have found their way into other archives or memorial institutions, or have even developed into an institution are not micro-archives as we understand them.

If the information above applies to a micro-archive you are familiar with, we would be glad to be in contact with you to explore possibilities for further cooperation.

How can EHRI assist micro-archives?

Many institutions holding collections related to the Holocaust work with a similar mission: To preserve the material legacy as a testimony for current and future generations about this dark period of history, to remember the victims, and to caution about the atrocities humans are capable of committing. To support this global endeavour, it has been EHRI’s goal to assist archives throughout Europe and the world in making important records accessible. EHRI provides an easy to search digital platform to swiftly find archival collections located in different locations.

We aim at increasing the scientific audience and public interest in these important archival collections, as well as at integrating additional archival data in order to make the links between the documents visible, and to enrich the stories these sources can tell.
The past decade has shown us that the archival and technical expertise among institutions varies a lot, therefore, close cooperation and learning from each other has been the foundation of EHRI’s activities. We would be glad to apply our knowledge around digital collection integration to your micro-archival collection and invite you to become part of the EHRI network by integrating your micro-archival collection into our portal. Together, we can develop and apply strategies to safeguard your collection(s) for future generations and make them accessible to researchers and the public at large.

**Get in touch!**

If your archival collection - or someone else’s collection you are aware of - applies to our definition of a micro-archive and the collection relates to the Holocaust, we would like to hear from you.
Please contact us via micro-archives@ehri-project.eu with:

- a brief description of the archival initiative you are either part of or know about;
- some information on the history of the collection, profile, scope (a historical event, a family’s biography, faith of a community, etc.) and scale of the collection (types and number of documents);
- if relevant: an explanation of the archival and/or technical structure that has been applied, such as the descriptive standard (e.g. IASD(G) or EAD);
- your contact information.

Let us know how to be in touch (email, phone, postal mail) and you can expect a message from our side soon.
Over 75 years after the end of the Second World War, Holocaust memory is under threat. Holocaust distortion is on the rise and is eroding our understanding of historical truth. Holocaust distortion benefits from a general lack of awareness. It doesn’t stop at national borders, nor is it found only in one language. International cooperation is essential to countering it.

ProtectTheFacts is an international initiative of the European Commission, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), the United Nations, and UNESCO, who have joined forces to raise awareness of Holocaust distortion – both how to recognise it and how to counter it.

At its simplest level, Holocaust distortion is rhetoric, written work, or other media that excuse, minimise, or misrepresent the known historical record of the Holocaust. Holocaust distortion paves the way for Holocaust denial, antisemitism, conspiracy myths and dangerous forms of nationalism.

Holocaust distortion makes us lose sight of our fundamental democratic values. It harms efforts to foster pluralistic, open societies.

When left unchallenged, Holocaust distortion allows antisemitism to inch towards the mainstream. History has taught us what can happen when antisemitism is normalised. Holocaust distortion can be found in all corners of society, from the media to politics and across the ideological spectrum. Countering it requires all of us to act.

The campaign, #ProtectTheFacts, aims to raise awareness of the importance of countering Holocaust distortion and promote recommendations and strategies among policymakers, Holocaust-related institutions, civil society, and the general public.
The #ProtectTheFacts campaign was officially launched early 2021. The campaign includes a website, which hosts information on the campaign, details on the phenomenon of Holocaust distortion and the social media shareables library. You can help spread the message about this urgent problem and encourage others to #ProtectTheFacts. Holocaust distortion doesn’t stop at national borders, nor is it found only in one language. International cooperation is essential to countering it.

1 in 20 Europeans have never heard of the Holocaust.

#ProtectTheFacts
Debra Barnes, who has written a novel inspired by her family history called The Young Survivors, was stunned to discover that her friend Karen had received a yellow candle in memory of her late aunt, Annette Szklarz.

Debra’s mother, Paulette, miraculously survived the Holocaust because she had measles when the Gestapo tried to take her, and was later hidden by nuns in a convent.

Her twin sister, Annette – who was registered under the name Danielle – was sadly taken from an orphanage in Louveciennes, Paris to Auschwitz in July 1944. She was in the last convoy to leave France.

When friend of fourteen years, Karen Markham, posted a photo of her yellow candles on Facebook last night, stunned Debra realised one of them was for her aunt.

“It’s amazing, there’s literally a one in six million chance of this happening. It’s so emotional,” said Debra, who works alongside Karen at the Association of Jewish Refugees.

“I’ve had messages from people saying it’s a sign, a ‘thank you’ for remembering them. I’ve been telling my family’s story through the book, and now I’ve got this sign. It’s quite spooky, really.”

Karen, who posted the photo on social media, said she was none the wiser about the incredible coincidence before Debra told her.

“It sent shivers up my spine and I was thrilled to have had the opportunity to light this candle for her,” she said.

“The chances of this happening were so slim which made it even more of an honour.”

Twins Paulette and Annette, the youngest of the five Szklarz children, were born in 1938 in Metz, a French town on the border with Germany. After her miraculous escape from the gas chambers, Paulette came to England where her maternal aunt lived, aged eight.

Paulette passed away on her birthday, 9 April, 2010, aged 72.
#ITSTARTEDWITHWORDS

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) launched a new Holocaust survivor-led, digital campaign before local anti-Jewish laws were enacted, before neighborhood shops and synagogues were destroyed, and before Jews were forced into ghettos, freight cars, and camps, words were used to stoke the fire of hate.

#ItStartedWithWords is a digital, Holocaust education campaign posting weekly videos of survivors from across the world reflecting on those moments that led up to the Holocaust — a period of time when they could not have predicted the ease with which their long-time neighbors, teachers, classmates, and colleagues would turn on them, transitioning from words of hate to acts of violence.

“The Holocaust started with words,” said Gideon Taylor, President of the Claims Conference. “Hateful words that were yelled in the park, spat on the street, and roared in the classroom. These words alienated, belittled, and shocked; but worse, these words gave birth to the horrific massacre of six million Jews.

The #ItStartedWithWords campaign shows through first-hand survivor testimony that the Holocaust didn’t come out of nowhere. It literally started with words.”

Coming on the heels of the successful #NoDenyingIt campaign, the #ItStartedWithWords initiative is part of a broader effort to raise awareness of the importance of Holocaust education. Specifically, this campaign will use survivor testimony to give context to the origins of the Holocaust, the foundation of antisemitism that Hitler and the Nazis used to generate support across Europe before a single act of war was undertaken. The goal of the campaign is to show how words of hate can become actions, and how those actions can have unimaginable outcomes.

Greg Schneider, Executive Vice President of the Claims Conference said, “You don’t wake up one morning deciding to participate in mass murder. Hate speech, propaganda, antisemitism, and racism were the roots that culminated in genocide. The shocking results of our 2020 U.S. Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey, which found that 63 percent of Millennials and Gen Z did not know six million Jews were murdered, clarifies for us how important it is, not just to teach the history of the Holocaust, but to provide context for how such a horrific outcome like the Holocaust started.

Several well-known Holocaust survivors from around the world recorded videos to be posted for the campaign.

Holocaust survivor Abe Foxman, born in Poland in 1940, now lives in the U.S. In his campaign video post he shares his thoughts on the origins of the Holocaust, saying “The crematoria, gas chambers in Auschwitz and elsewhere did not begin with bricks, it began with words...evil words, hateful words, antisemitic words, words of prejudice. And they were permitted to proceed to violence because of the absence of words.”

Holocaust survivor and Chairman, Yad Vashem Council Yisrael Meir Lau, born in Poland in 1937, now lives in Israel. His hometown of Piotrkow Trybunalski had more than 10,000 Jews before the war, but most were deported to Treblinka in 1942 and killed. “They thought they could eliminate a people with words,” he says in his video post. “And then it turned out that it indeed happened.”

Holocaust survivor Charlotte Knobloch, was born in 1932 in Munich, Germany where she still lives. In her video post she shares her first memory of being treated differently because she was a Jew. “It began with words.
Abe Foxman

Holocaust survivor Abe Foxman, born in Poland in 1940, now lives in the U.S. In his campaign video post he shares his thoughts on the origins of the Holocaust, saying “The crematoria, gas chambers in Auschwitz and elsewhere did not begin with bricks, it began with words...evil words, hateful words, antisemitic words, words of prejudice. And they were permitted to proceed to violence because of the absence of words.”
because she was a Jew. “It began with words. They came before the horrific acts, the murders, the crimes…” she says. “I was four years old, when I was in the courtyard of the house across the street, I wanted to play with the neighbor’s children. I did that almost every day. But now the gate was suddenly locked. My friends looked at me silently, before I could understand what was going on, the concierge’s wife came in and started yelling at me, ‘Jewish children are not allowed to play with our children.’ I was four years old. I didn’t even know what Jews were.”

#ItStartedWithWords illustrates how racist and antisemitic speech led to actions that nearly saw the mass extermination of an entire people. To provide educational resources from partner museums and institutions, as well as the collection of the survivor videos from the campaign, the Claims Conference has also launched ItStartedWithWords.org, a web site that will serve as a resource for educators around the world.

Nearly 50 museums and institutions from around the world are participating in the campaign including: the United Nations (UN); the Auschwitz Memorial, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM); Yad Vashem; the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA); Fondation Pour La Memoire De La Shoah; the Anne Frank House, Netherlands; UNESCO; the Memorial of the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin; the Anne Frank Center, Argentina; the Montreal Holocaust Museum; Holocaust Educational Trust of the UK; the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust; Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center; the Museum of Jewish Heritage; POLIN, Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Warsaw and many more.
Holocaust education campaign in which students around the world reflect on the moments leading up to the Holocaust and how they could not have predicted the transition into such a horrific event. This demonstrates how hateful language can evolve into real outcomes.