

Outgoing Seminar In Dachau Memorial Site

Research-Based Didactic Material



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Editing by: Kinga Anna Gajda, Aneta Pazik

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Part I

Kinga Anna Gajda, Aneta Pazik

Outgoing Seminar as Project Based Teaching of Intercultural Competence – a Description of the Results of the Project ‘Study trip to Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter

The French philosopher Paul Ricœur, in his *Reflections of a new ethos for Europe*, outlines three models of combining identity and the category of the Oneself as Another. The first is the model of translation, which is a result of European and worldwide multilingualism. It encourages learning two living languages, at least in order to communicate with the users of each language.¹ Translation as a paradigm or theoretical model has to be distinguished from its literal meaning. Ricœur says that translation can be seen as a model for the way in which we deal with 'strangeness'. The translator is a mediator who has to transfer the meaning of one language into another language. The translating as a process is not only a way of passive translation from language to language, but also an active interpretation from one culture to another. It is not only an interpretation of words, but also contents and cultural codes. The next paradigm, the model of the exchange of memories described by Ricœur, is an inspiration for the project “Study trip to Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter.” It is the traditional paradigm placed between the individual and collective memory, and between cultures. The paradigm concerns habits, norms, beliefs, and principles that make up the culture, as well as differences in cultural memory and ways of interpreting historical facts. The French philosopher underlines that the cultural impact on the collective memory, the way of calling key events, repeating remembrance and celebration make the cultures impossible to be told in a different way, and leads to ossification

¹ P. Ricœur, *Jaki ma być nowy etos Europy?*, [In:] *Komunikacja międzykulturowa. Zderzenia i spotkania*, ed. A. Kapciak, L. Korporowicz, A. Tysza, Warszawa 1996, p. 98.

of the history of each cultural group's identity. One of the most important key events was World War II and the existence of concentration camps. The aim of the project is to re-tell these events by youth as juxtaposed with the way of telling it by people who survived these experiences. It consists in confrontation of two different narrations, in order to create a new type of memory – collective. In the frame of the project, the lecture of past events is multiplied and creates a new story told in new, different language, from different points of view. This ability of re-telling the key events, according to Ricœur, finds support in the ability of exchanging cultural memories. The philosopher underlines that the touchstone of this ability is the desire to bind and understand symbols, and respectful participation in the reproduction of key events belonging to the various national cultures. Meanwhile, Leonidas Donskis, a Lithuanian philosopher and political scientist, notes that “the politics of remembering takes its beginning from a standard mode of understanding. Policy of remembering is as good and healthy enough as permitted by the equality of two or more contrasting narrative and memory options. The equivalence of the two opposing interpretations of the same phenomenon ... is the basis for the contemporary times presented as with a human face.”²

Ricœur stresses the narrative character of storytelling and reviving facts. In his opinion, stories and memories express and shape temporality, and take part in the process of creating and building identity. Everyone – says Ricœur – assumes an identity for a narrative story which is told to them and the one she or he tells about themselves. Therefore, identity is mixed with the identities of storytellers, in order to create the next, higher level

² L. Donskis, *Refleksje na temat kanonu, tożsamości i polityki pamięci*, [In:] *Podręcznik dialogu. Zaufanie i tożsamość*, ed. K. Czyżewski, J. Kulas, M. Golubieniewski, Sejny 2012.

of stories which come from the intersection of diverse histories.”³ Re-telling of a story is involved with history, and the way of telling of one’s own story is a branch of others’ stories. And just this kind of storytelling is an aim of the project. The aim is to re-tell the story of World War II and concentration camps, in order to create a common memory – common for the youth who know facts via memories and interpreting others, and for the eyewitness-survivors of history, such as Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz,⁴ who was a guest of the young people during the preparatory seminar, or Abba Naor, who was a speaker in Dachau. It is also an attempt to create common memories about concentration camps in Poland and Germany. The transient, impermanent identification with history and memory contributes – according to Ricœur – to re-conceptualization of the past and future by constantly remodeling histories which people tell each other about themselves. Therefore, the purpose of the project is to exchange memory on the narrative level in order to understand it. It is a submission of cross-reading key events from different cultures, and mutual assistance in the liberation from caustic memories.

The testimonies of Skibicka-Maksymowicz and Naor play an important role in the revival of memories and they are a proof of the past key events concentrating different culture. Naor, a Lithuanian Jew, survived the Ghetto of Kaunas and then he was a prisoner in the Concentration Camp Stutthof, a subcamp of the Dachau camp in Utting, and at Kaufering I. Skibicka-Maksymowicz was sent to the camp as a Belarusian child. Her next culture was the “culture” of the camp and Hebrew culture, because

³ P. Ricœur, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

⁴ See: <http://gosc.pl/doc/1454082.Dziewczynka-z-Auschwitz> (access 22.10.2013)
<http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Byla-wiezniarka-obozu-Auschwitz-Lidia-Skibicka-Maksymowicz-rany-nigdy-sie-nie-zabliznia,wid,15286675,wiadomosc.html> (access 22.10.2013)

Jewish children taught her their culture and religion. After the War, she was adopted by a Polish family, baptized in the Catholic denomination, and educated in the Polish culture. Many years afterwards, she managed to find her family living in Russia. Although she chose a Polish name and surname, a Polish family and birth date was given to her randomly, by a doctor who was examining her after the war. The story told by Skibicka-Maksymowicz is not only one of memories of key events, but also one of diffusion of many cultures, and a selection of one of them, as well as a story about creating one's own version of combining several elements. Her testimony shows that tradition is on the side of debt to the past. Therefore, a culture remains viable only if it is still the subject of a continued interpretation process. The project inspired by models described by Ricœur consists of two tasks: translation of a culture to culture, and eyewitnesses' memories imposed on the memories of youth. Thus, it is a project of memory exchange, which proves that the exchange of memory and culture is a way of shaping a contemporary transcultural identity.

Working on identity is a kind of work on the integration of multiple components, with different cultural and time backgrounds. So, the aim of the individual process of defining identity is to discover and accept its transculturality and understand the whole process. The purpose is also to learn to build a new type of diversity, which is interpreted and created from an individual point of view. Transcultural identity – described by Welsch – focuses on the individual right to build and create a sense of belonging, which is not simply belonging to a national, local or ethnic culture, but is a kind of mix, made up of individual perspectives, and subject only to an individual assessment. This kind of identity is made up by cross-memories and exchange of stories, interpreting key events, and conscious building of identity based on the process of understanding past and

contemporary cultures. The transcultural identity – as Welsch claims – entails the awareness of contingency and agreement with alternative elements of identity. It is, therefore, the identity gained during a journey through different cultures, stories and memories, and by applying various influences subject to the individual. It seems the transcultural identity is closely related to intercultural competence. The higher the awareness of transculturality and transcultural competence, the easier the process of building transcultural identity.

Intercultural competence may be shaped through the influence of different processes. Formal and non-formal education, during which teaching of intercultural competence relies on the transmission of a particular kind of knowledge to the pupils, as well as deepening their particular skills on the basis of a handful of fundamental values, has particular significance for their development. The scope of intercultural competence teaching is determined by the definition of intercultural competence created by Byram, one of the most cited ones in academic literature. According to it, intercultural competence consists of several components which are divided into the following categories: attitudes, knowledge, skills, and values. The aim of the first one is to adopt the attitudes of openness and curiosity. Knowledge should not only refer to the particular cultural context, but one should also teach about social processes, as well as about their illustrations and products. It means that pupils learn about that how people perceive themselves and what their knowledge about others is. It is constituted by three elements: a skill of comparison, interpretation, and relating. Thereby, the pupils get to know how to conduct dialogue with persons living in other cultures and how to ask them questions about their convictions and opinions. As far as the last above-mentioned category is concerned, we need to take into account that the aim of teaching international competence is not

to change the values of the pupils, but to teach them about the ways of acting in conformity with fundamental values such as: respect to human dignity, equality of human rights, and the democratic basis of social interactions.⁵ There are multiple methods of teaching international competence. One of the most effective ones, and at the same time one providing ample opportunities of cooperation with pupils, is the project method. On one hand, it allows adaptation, in a flexible way, of the plan of classes and teaching techniques to particular groups and their needs, and taking into account the particular character of a group of participants. On the other hand, this method also offers possibilities of controlled participation of the students in the process of preparation of classes.

The project method was defined and described by an American educator in his text titled *The Project Method*⁶ in 1918. He presented the project method as an intentional act. In Poland, this kind of method was introduced in the interwar years, though initially not as the preferred method. In accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 20.08.2010s (21a.2),⁷ an educational project is the pupils' common, planned effort in order to dissolve a concrete problem using different methods. The project method is recognized as one of the most attractive teaching methods. "The method relies on initiating, planning and implementation, as well evaluating work by pupils. It is best if the source of the project is the world of everyday life, and not an abstract science. The starting point of the project is some problematic situation,

⁵ M. Byram, B. Gribkova, H. Starkey, *Developing the Intercultural Dimension in Language Teaching. A practical Introduction for Teachers*, Strasbourg 2002, p. 20.

⁶ W.H. Kilpatrick, *The Project Method: The Use of the Purposeful Act in the Educative Process*, Columbia University 1918.

⁷ <http://www.znp.edu.pl/media/files/76a5a452775e256f336bdeed0b41e107.pdf> (access 12.08.2013)

intention, or initiative.”⁸ Mirosław S. Szymański mentions four basic elements of the project method: the progressive role of the teacher, the subjectivity of the student, wholeness and moving away from the traditional method of evaluating the students’ progress.⁹ The project should be realized by teachers and pupils/students alike.¹⁰ The students should be engaged in the project from its beginning to the stage of evaluation. This kind of teaching method connects the traditional model of knowledge transfer with the possibility of active participation of students in the activities, and thus the theoretical knowledge, with the practical application of it. It allows one to obliterate the boundaries between rigidly delineated objects and to enable collaboration of specialists from several fields in a multi-perspective and an interdisciplinary overview, as well as a multi-faceted approach to the given problem. Moreover, it relies on the dialog between pupils and teachers and exchanging of pieces of information and views. In the project method, it is important that pupils gain tangible effects of their work. The advantage of the project method is the possibility of cooperation between teachers and specialists, of leaving the school/university building and realizing the project in the specialist institutions. The method bases on the idea of assuming aims and deadlines in advance, as well as the form of evaluation and methodology. The method makes it possible to use different kinds of teaching and refers to methods of exposing, utilizing the anecdote, explanation, reading, description, talk, lecture, multimedia presentation, lecture informative, and the practical means – the practice question, project method, guided text, activation method, discussion teaching, games,

⁸ M.S. Szymański, *O metodzie projektów: z historii, teorii i praktyki pewnej metody kształcenia*, Warszawa 2000, p. 61.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ J. Królikowski, *Projekt edukacyjny: materiały dla zespołów międzyprzedmiotowych*, Warszawa 2000.

simulation, decision making or drama, lecture, but also the pedagogy of creativity, creative thinking, teaching and drama therapy in the core curriculum. At the beginning of work, the teacher should describe the method for working with students and adapt it to the intellectual and financial capabilities of the group, as well as the curriculum.

The system of project teaching was implemented in work with pupils while conducting the academic class of intercultural competence. The main goal was for pupils to develop their competences to work and communicate in an international team. It was important to broaden their knowledge about the culture of Europe, widen their horizons of perception and let them know about the differences in European ways of thinking, expressing the feelings and communicating while working on a common project. Moreover, the pupils were encouraged to follow the current events in press and use various sources of information, which aimed at raising their awareness of common European culture and to promote their own region in its framework. Other important goals included development of the attitudes of tolerance and respect towards other cultures and values, skills such as: creativity, responsibility for the team and completion of the task, the ability to judge and form the conclusions and detecting the good practices and patterns. The aim of the project was also to adjust the high school curricula to the European standards and expectations of the globalizing world. The project was combined from lectures and workshops conducted by scholars and PhD students of the Institute for European Studies at the Jagiellonian University. The main focus was on the manner of teaching, which was not only to provide profound knowledge but also to work case studies as exemplary problems, to learn creative thinking and to combine theory with practice. The pupils had an opportunity to search for the similarities and differences between the cultures of different countries in the European Union, and

to seek or form an intercultural dialogue. They had to learn how to work in groups, confront their knowledge with the reality, analyze by comparison, discuss both with peers and adults and have respect for their own heritage. The classes on certain subject began with a lecture (2 lesson units) which was then re-worked during a workshop (4 lesson units). The whole program takes 2.5 years. During the first year, the pupils are introduced to the European studies. The module teaching starts from the 2nd year and each module takes 3 months (1 lecture and workshop per month).

In the framework of the academic class of intercultural competence, a project “Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project” was organized. It was considered as the complementary method of deepening the intercultural competence of pupils. An issue of memory was chosen as the leading theme, as it is both a factor influencing individual identity, and one that can generate confrontation situations, especially when one must face stereotyped images in relations between representatives of nations which were antagonized in the past. The aim of the project “Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project” was to sensitize the participants to the questions connected with individual and collective memory during a cycle of classes were conducted on-site (at Jagiellonian University and in High School), as well as during an outgoing seminar in Dachau, a little German town, where after 1933 a concentration camp was located that became a model one for the next camps established outside the borders of the Third Reich. The role of the participants in the classes, meetings with guests, and victims of the concentration camps in Poland and in Germany was to make them more aware of the mechanisms of shaping individual memory and to develop their skills in the field of exploring the relations between the individual and collective memory. The project’s implementation proceeded in several

stages. It was initiated as a result of observation of the work of pupils taking part in an academic class project of intercultural competence, as well as under the influence of a conviction that intercultural competence should be taught not only on the theoretical level, but first of all – on the practical one, through confrontation with representatives of different cultures. According to Arno Ken Kumagay and Monica L. Lypson, teaching of intercultural competence does not inclusively mean the static verification of a check-list, but is a constant critical adaptation and forming of a particular way of thinking and knowledge. Thus, it is important to ensure the continuous practice and multiple possibilities of deepening the competence in new and changing contexts.¹¹ One of the methods fulfilling these exigencies in developing the intercultural competence are outgoing seminars realized abroad. The Council of Europe states that even short-term study trips can be something more than just a possibility of mastering language skills, being a “holistic educational experience that ensures the means of using the intercultural skills and gaining new attitudes and values.”¹² In the case of the project “Study trip to the Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project November 2013” the term “outgoing seminar” was seen as a planned cycle of classes conducted by trained teachers using multiple didactic methods and techniques, involving the participants through encouraging them to reflect and express their own considerations. During the outgoing seminar, the classes (both lectures and workshops) are its key parts – qualitatively and quantitatively, which provides the participants with time and conditions for reflection. Thus, in the case of the study trip to memorial sites (as they are defined by the German-Polish Youth Office) it is necessary

¹¹ A. Lee, R. Poch, M. Shaw, R. Williams, *Engaging Diversity in Undergraduate Classrooms: A Pedagogy that supports Intercultural Competence: ASHE Higher Education Report*, Vol. 38, No. 2, p. 45.

¹² M. Byram, B. Gribkova, H. Starkey, *op.cit.*, p. 20.

to avoid situations where the sightseeing part of the trip would make the participants belittle the questions and reflections connected with the visit to the memorial site. Therefore, these two categories of activities should not be blended during the same day.¹³ That recommendation was taken into account in the phase of formulating the aims and the preliminary program of the project “Study trip to the Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project November 2013.” The choice of country where the seminar in a site of memory was about to be organized, was determined by a variety of factors. The classes conducted in the Institute of European Studies of the Jagiellonian University, in the framework of academic intercultural competence class, concerned the mechanisms of forming identity, historical and collective memory, and its significance in the process of the construction of identity. On the other hand, during the classes, the subject of difficult relations between Poland and Germany in the 20th century was also broached. Germany played, for the Polish, the role of a “significant other”, in relation to which Polish national identity was created, also after World War II. Then, the communist powers in their propaganda constructed a negative image of Germany and Germans, which was diffused not only in the media, but also in history textbooks — with the aim to present an unchangeable, aggressive and imperialistic nature of the Western neighbor nation.¹⁴ After 1990, the factors shaping the image of Germans in Poland were more diverse, which determined the fact that in line of the research conducted in Poland after its access to the European Union,

¹³ *Wizyty w Miejscach Pamięci. Wskazówki PNWM dla organizatorów Polsko-Niemieckiej Współpracy Młodzieży*, ed. D. Bastos, H. Ziesing Warszawa/Poczdham 2012, p. 5. http://www.pnwm.org/fileadmin/user_upload/publication/1347617160_end_gedenkstaette_3_pl_web_nichtantragsbezogen.pdf (access 08.09.2013).

¹⁴ Z. Mazur, *Obraz Niemiec w polskich podręcznikach do nauczania historii (1945 – 1989)*, Poznań 1996.

Germans were perceived relevantly positively.¹⁵ On the other hand, there are constantly new obstacles in the dialogue concerning controversial events in the history of bilateral relations, especially World War II and the question of the expulsions of Germans from Poland after 1945. These issues are used in emotional historical politics in Poland and in Germany, which can delay the process of mutual understanding between young people. The important factor in deepening the intercultural competences in this range is to present the youth with the issues tied to the construction of historical and collective memory in Germany with regard to the events connected with World War II. Because of the specificity of the problem, a decision was made to cooperate with a German educational institution possessing a wide experience in teaching the complex processes of the evolution of German historical memory, as well as with the significance of concentration camps and the Nazi system in their memory. Therefore, the contact with Max Mannheimer Studienzentrum from Dachau was initiated. Regarding the function of the Dachau concentration camp in the period between 1933 to 1945 in of the Nazi politics, classes were intended to open up the possibility of explaining the processes of creating the historical memory within a debate on concentration camps, and its future functioning in the public space.

Students participated in the second stage of the project by submitting ideas, and helping teachers to formulate the subject and goals of the project. Commissioning of carrying out some pilot research to students seems to be an interesting idea. The next step is to prepare the schedule of a project. During the discussion with students, the teacher can verify the students' level of general knowledge of the problem being explored, and also perform an analysis of their attitudes towards the phenomena and processes

¹⁵ E.g. M. Falkowski, *Polska – Niemcy. Wzajemne postrzeganie Polaków i Niemców w obliczu wspólnej obecności w Unii Europejskiej*. <http://www.isp.org.pl/site.php?id=299> (access 06.11.2013).

connected with memory, with regard to formulated aims of the project. The results of observations can be taken into consideration during the expansion of the focus of particular workshops, as well as a preparatory seminar. The fourth stage is to prepare a project. The project's schedule should be also drawn up with participation of the students. Works on schedule are based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe and German-Polish Youth Office with regard to preparation a "study abroad", so that it could deliver predicted results and increase the intercultural competence of the project's participants. Both organizations stipulate that outgoing seminars should be organized in three stages: a preparatory phase, a fieldwork phase, and a follow-up phase.¹⁶ The aim of the preparatory seminar in the framework of the project "Study trip to the Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project November 2013" was to introduce the participants into the subject of concentration camps and the theory of memory that is essential in the situation when one needs to provide the students with adequate understanding of notions, because it is not included in the core curriculum in high schools. The fieldwork phase, as it was presented above, is considered to open up a possibility for students to work in a different cultural context (also in an indirect way). In the framework of the third phase (follow-up phase) one can apply the method of reflective model of intercultural competence that provides one with techniques of assessment of the intercultural competence level of the participants. On the other hand, it incites the young to reflection and contextualization of their experience, so that they can indicate and express the level of increasing their intercultural competence on their own.¹⁷ This method can be employed through

¹⁶ M. Byram, B. Gribkova, H. Starkey, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20.

¹⁷ T.R. Williams, *The Reflective Model of Intercultural Competency: A Multidimensional, Qualitative Approach to Study Abroad Assessment*, "Frontiers. The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad", Vol. 18, Fall 2009, p. 289.

organization of a students' conference, during which participants of the project can describe their experiences verbally. The second possibility is to publish the expressions of the students in a book. The latter requires taking into account that during the process of proofreading, the quality of expressions should not be interfered and the primary intentions of students are maintained. The implementation of the project "Study trip to the Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project November 2013" was predated by a preparatory seminar for students, which was organized and conducted by the staff of the Institute of European Studies and Center for Holocaust Studies of the Jagiellonian University. It was held two weeks before the main part of the project started. The classes were divided into lectures, workshops, and a meeting with a victim of the Nazi system. At the beginning of the seminar, workshops concerning the guidelines for a properly written quasi-scientific article and verbal presentation were conducted. The lectures concerned the introduction to the totalitarian political and social system, explanation of its notions, reasons of its inception, and significance of concentration camps in that system. The next part of the lectures was devoted to the issues of memory, its theory and role in the construction of identity. During the lectures, different kinds of methods for stirring students into action were applied (for example, work with documents). During the last part, the students were confronted with the individual memory of Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz, who was transported to Auschwitz as a three-year old child. Her speech preceded the introduction on the life of children in concentration camps.

The main part of the project was the study trip to Dachau. Here, in November 4-7, 2013, classes were conducted in cooperation with Max Mannheimer Studienzentrum. In the framework of the classes, two visits to Dachau Memorial Site were undertaken. After each of them, students

could express their feelings and opinions during a summary meeting in a form of a workshop in small groups up to 12 persons. The subject of the workshops broached the questions of relations between the town and the concentration camp, memory discourses connected with the former concentration camp in Dachau after 1945, and the “Dachauer Prozesse” of 1945/1946. On the last day of the seminar, a meeting with a witness was held. During the workshops, multiple didactic methods and techniques were applied: a biographical one, work on documents and movies, conversations. One of the tasks in which students were engaged in fieldwork was presentation of their reflections on the subject connected with memory on totalitarianism in different socio-historical contexts. Thus, the participants were asked to elaborate a research problem and then explore it during outgoing workshops within the project.

The fifth stage is to present a project. The results are publicly presented, for example, during student conferences. This allows participants to confront their ideas and be evaluated not only by teachers but also by other students. First, the teacher should explain what the rules for making a presentation are, and give them the know-how. The last stage is to evaluate the projects. The project method allows the extension of the traditional assessment and creates a new model of it, which undoubtedly is desired by the students. The teacher can use also a descriptive method of evaluating the students, as the groups progress. The pupils’ creativity, engagement and methods of working are evaluated. It is possible to prepare questionnaires, where students evaluate the project idea, the way of realizing it, and the projects’ strengths and weaknesses.

The project method is a contemporary one of practical way of teaching.¹⁸ It expands the participants' knowledge through their active participation in the project. Its effective way of transferring knowledge translates into the students' results. The pupils not only accumulate knowledge, but also learn planning, organization and a discipline of work. They have to divide the work and set tasks by themselves, as well as to develop a methodology of work. During shared work, they learn to cooperate, dissolve conflicts, argue their points of view and participate in a creative discussion. They learn the meaning of compromise. The project method is not only a theoretical way of knowledge acquisition, but also an applied way of using theory in practice. Active participation in the project, the feeling of being a subject of group's activity, self-motivation, the use of personal experience, appealing to self-esteem, cultural heritage and aesthetics, in addition to the ability to express their own arguments reinforce the pupils' interest in learning. So, the development of the pupils' skills and competences is more important than knowledge.

This method conforms to module teaching. In the framework of the latter, it is possible to implement "wider" overriding projects as it is shown here on the basis of the example of the "Study trip to Concentration Camp Memorial Site and Youth Encounter Project in November 2013." These can consist of smaller research projects. On any level, it is important to ensure the students' engagement. However, its scope shall be different depending on the level of the project. In case of overriding projects, the suggestions of students in the field of the project's main theme, as well as its substantial range should be taken into account. In the project analyzed in the article, the interests of students connected with the topic of memory determined the

¹⁸ L. Krzyżaniak, *Metoda projektów w ujęciu teoretycznym*, [In:] *Mali badacze: metoda projektu w edukacji elementarnej*, ed. J.H. Helm, L.G. Kat, Warszawa 2003.

choice of considered issues. Also, the range of problems was elaborated by teachers in conformity with the results of consultations held with the students. The teachers verified the students' ideas, as well as the possibilities of their realization, and then they prepared guidelines for the project on the basis of project management methods and techniques. In the framework of the overriding project, the students are divided into groups and they can implement their own research projects—that must be documented. Thus, they need to prepare the specific research topic on their own, allocate the tasks within the group members, and design a schedule—taking into account restrictions resulting from the overriding project. Therefore, an outgoing seminar prepared on the basis of the project method's guidelines may contribute to the development of two categories of competences in the students: in the field of intercultural competence, and in the range of organization and realization of group undertakings within a determined schedule.

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Kinga Anna Gajda

In preparation of a conference and/or text

A student conference is an opportunity for students with similar interests; motivated by their willingness to express themselves on a particular subject, presenting their points of view and the results of their research. The duration is usually quite limited and normally does not last longer than 30 minutes. After the presentation, a discussion takes place where the public has an opportunity to ask questions of the presenting individual, while also simultaneously providing a critique. Usually following the conference, the presented research is modified based upon mutual discussion and subsequently published. In preparing for a student conference, the presentation of one's research requires a dual-track approach. On one hand, a person must prepare the research and presentation itself, while on the other hand, a method and manner with which this presentation will be carried out in front of the public. In both cases, it is imperative to commence with a clear and precise statement outlining the main subject matter, which means clarifying (narrowing) the topic into a lucid scientific problem. The point of the text is therefore the ability to conquer this difficulty. Failure to identify relevant questions leads to the work only appearing scientific, unless it is dedicated to a very limited or narrow topic, then the problem is replaced by the objective. Working without problem / objective essentially means accidental gathering of information, which in turn inadequately motivates one to conduct research as well as engage in their individual reflections.

The topic should not be too broad-this is because the student can be easily exposed to being accused of favoritism on certain issues, while

simultaneously omitting others. Umberto Eco¹⁹ suggests that the topic should rather be quite narrow. He believes that the more we reduce the thematic scope of our subject, the better we are able to work and the more stable our foundations. It also seems that the theme should be well formulated so that the author, in fulfilling his research on a subject could simultaneously fulfill himself and his interests. The student should therefore better clarify the topic, better define it, so that throughout his work he is able to put forth a research question and of course aim to answer it. The student should be able, therefore, to formulate thoughts in such a way that the summary was a response to the question that serves as the objective of the response.

The preparation of a written response should be based upon three stages. The main content-oriented first stage, or the output stage, is to formulate questions that the author of the paper wants to answer. This is equivalent to defining the objective of further work. Preparation of the work therefore, relies upon solving a specific problem, providing answers to specific questions which firstly the author must ask of himself.

- chose a topic
- identify the problem
- break down the problem into a series of sub-issues
- formulate additional and aiding problems
- search for information and auxiliary means
- search for an optimal solution
- conduct practical experiments or engage in thought processes
- try to suggest several consecutive solutions to a hypothesis
- develop more or less a detailed plan of action

The work arrangement should be logical and well defined on the basis of content. To achieve this, it is advised to follow three guidelines:

¹⁹ U. Eco, *Jak napisać pracę dyplomową. Poradnik dla humanistów*, Warszawa 2007.

1. principle of completeness – taking under consideration all important elements and avoiding unnecessary ones.
2. principle of subordination – every aspect of work must result from a formulated thesis topic and the concept of solving a problem. Every additional aspect of work must consist of continued and consistent logical continuation of the previous parts.
3. principle of exclusivity – this same issue should not be discussed many times in many places of work (every issue should be presented once in a logical and comprehensive manner).

The second stage consists of attempting to answer the fundamental, targeted questions while keeping in mind the necessity to adhere to the content and to not make too many allusions, and to not deviate from the problem. A common mistake is a gap within the argument and suppressing of opposing views, or leaving them unanswered. It is important to keep in mind the volume of work, which is usually small. It is estimated that twenty-minute speech is eight standard pages of double spaced text. The most important part of this stage is finding solutions or providing a statement of failure. The final stage is to summarize all considerations, verifying that all solutions are in fact correct, while also empirically verifying the theoretical approach. Throughout this stage it is also advised to develop an edited text.

- check it in terms of content and style
- correct errors
- insert footnotes
- present all quotations accurately
- create a bibliography.

Umberto Eco suggests that editing of work consists of identifying of utilized terms, except those that are obvious or commonly used. He

emphasized that the work should not be written using lengthy compound sentences, but rather short and concise and thus easily understood. Too comprehensive and complex sentences often slow down the pace of speech and often blur the transmitted content. The hallmark of a scientific text is carried within relative clauses - they are first to be used in scientific and erudite texts. Meanwhile, complex coordinated statements are rather used to report loose observations, describing experiences but without interpreting them. It is worth dividing the text into multiple paragraphs and using impersonal, rather than writing in first person singular or plural. Eco also writes that it is necessary to quote. He emphasizes that quoting fragments of sources should not be too broad, and that quotes should not serve merely as an ornament within a text. The essay should be cited only if it supports or confirms the thesis of the author. The quotes are to be faithful. If the author disagrees with the point of view expressed within the quote, that the quote should be followed by an appropriate critical commentary. The authors and the sources of every quotation should be clearly marked. Reference to an author and work must be clear, easily understood and justified. Another example of using an author's ideas is through paraphrasing, or summarizing in your own words the views of a given author. It is however imperative to always remember to credit a proper source if the view is not one's own. Cited works should always be found in a bibliography located at the end of a paper.

It seems that the ideal form of a text is in the form of an essay, which involves formulating a thesis or hypothesis (meaning formulating a problem or putting forth a question), outlining relevant arguments in support of one's thesis as well as abolishing it, the weighing of these arguments and

subsequently confirming or rejecting the thesis. Jarosław Rudniański²⁰ suggests that while working on a paper, to foremost write down all incoming thoughts, including those which could potentially but not definitely find themselves within the work, as well as those which should or must be included. These ideas can be written in a non-stylistically fashion. The objective of jotting is in fact supposed to stimulate thinking in a certain direction, the so called thought process startup. After some time, go back to the jottings and review notes supplementing them. After each consecutive reading, you should write down a short outline of your text (the subconscious mind has already been made to develop this material) or write it down as a draft. This type of initial draft writing will enable systematization of thoughts. Only following this process should you write a finalized version of your text or read the draft out-loud while making corrections in your finalized work. Rudniański also mentions activities aimed at stimulating the writing process: conversations about the subject of your work, realization of problems that require solutions, formulation of a clear objective. Following the writing of the text, it is recommended to proof-read the work by another author.

In assessing the text, it is important to take into account the correctness of the content matter, as well as its factual and logical layout. The objective of the text is to gradually come closer to the answer sought after by work's fundamental question. Every next part of the work should make sure of the previous one. The last assessing criterion is editorial corrections. The very same criteria are taken under consideration during the assessment of a conference presentation. The presentation can but does not have to utilize multimedia aids. This form of presentation allows the transmittance of information in an easier and more interesting manner. It usually consists

²⁰ J. Rudniański, *Jak się uczyć?*, Warszawa 2001.

of a slide show (Powerpoint). Preparation of this type of presentation requires developing a plan and an outline, the content and choice of tools, design, text and graphics. It should be remembered that this type of presentation should only be used to reinforce the transfer of a specific message or idea, and not the idea itself. Therefore, each slide should not include too much information but rather definitions and bullet points which elaborate further the author's ideas. A successful presentation is one that is fully thought out, logically and consistently. It is better to use 'simple' fonts, utilizing sentence equivalents, uncomplicated graphic and video, as well as avoiding of unnecessary elements - presentation should focus the attention of the audience, rather than distract it. During the presentation, there should be no reading directly from the screen, but merely referencing or commenting on the information presented within the slides. It is equally encouraged to anticipate the following slide. It is a waste of time to concentrate on things that are obvious. It is important to remain within the allotted time frame. The manner with which the presentation is delivered is also very important. A well-made presentation is one that serves as a visual aid during speaking, pictures or key words allow you to stick to the story and follow the outlined plan or sequence of the presentation. Just like the slide show, one should rethink their appearance. For this purpose, it is recommended that you answer yourself the following questions:

- what do I want to convey?
- who is my audience?
- in what way do I want to address the audience: formally or informally, seriously or jokingly?

Just prior to the presentation it is recommended to remind yourself of its content. It is better to firstly practice your appearance in front of a mirror or tape it and review it, in order to correct any mistakes. It is

important that the content of your presentation is legible, easily understood and interesting. It is imperative to stick to the content, speak clearly and be convincing. Throughout the orientation it is recommended to smile but not excessively. Smiling encourages the listener to cultivate a positive attitude. The presentation should contain a clear synopsis of the problem - specified and precisely identified problem, assumptions, arguments, systematized results, comparison of results with those previously forecasted. After its introduction, you should commence a discussion - encourage questions and provide answers. You can indicate to the audience the most problematic elements. It is also wise to accept criticism from the remaining groups or to carefully listen to their analysis, introduce your own analysis of the results, which will serve to prepare your subsequent appearance.

In order for the student to properly prepare himself for an appearance during a student conference, he should have received topic considerably prior to the presentation, required number of pages to be written, editorial parameters, the amount of time allotted as well as assessing criteria.

Below are examples of evaluation criteria:

- development of hypothesis/ thesis statement 5 pts.
- autonomy of work – 5 pts.
- the effort and work invested in preparation of the presentation – 5 pts.
- choice of presentation format and its structure – 5 pts.
- ability to analyze and interpret sources – 5 pts.
- ability to express individual judgment, presentation of a distinct point of view and an ability to independently draw conclusions – 5 pts.
- logic of independent conclusions – 5 pts.
- considering the prospect of the future– 5 pts.
- information on sources / literature review – 5 pts.
- developed appendix– 5 pts.

- scientific approach to the project– 5 pts.
- scientific approach to project presentation during the conference – 5 pts.
- the manner of answering questions from the participants– 5pts.
- discussion participation during the conference – 5 pts.
- objective assessment of others – 5 pts.
- self-evaluation – 5 pts.

MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF POINTS - 80

GRADE	POINTS
6	80
5	79-68
4	67-55
3	54-40
2	39-30
1	29-0

Translation: Monika Eriksen

Totalitarian system and rules of its functioning on the example of the Third Reich. Theoretical assumptions

The 20th century is a century of totalitarianisms. Tzvetan Todorov even maintains that totalitarianism is the innovation of the 20th century.²¹ In historical terms, its origins are marked by World War I, which gave rise to mass extremist movements and parties – both on the left and the right side of the political scene. The end of the War brought new political systems (or “new tyrannies”, according to Krzysztof Pomian), which were characterized by two innovations: they were either revolutionary or reactionary to modern democracy based on the popular voting and open to participation of masses in public life.²²

Taking into consideration the complexity of antidemocratic systems in the course of the previous century, scientists argue as to which of them one can describe as totalitarian. Generally, there is a consensus that two of them may be defined that way: Italian fascism and Nazism. When Mussolini was formulating the ideological foundations of the fascist state, he spoke about it as *lo stato totalitario* based on the leading idea “all for the state, nothing outside the state, all in the state.”²³ Giovanni Gentile, the leading ideologist of the Italian fascism, also referred to the idea of fascist state as a totalitarian state in his publications. He wrote: “for fascism all is in the state and nothing human spiritual cannot exist and have its value outside the state. In this regard fascism is a totalitarian and fascist state constitutes a synthesis and unity of every kind of values, it shapes, executes

²¹ T. Todorov, *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, Princeton 2003, p. 2.

²² K. Pomian, *Oblicza Dwudziestego Wieku. Szkice Historyczno-Polityczne*, Lublin 2002, p. 80-81.

²³ M. Zmierzak, *Totalitaryzm czy totalitaryzmy? O kłopotach z definiowaniem pojęcia*, [In:] *Totalitaryzm. Wybrane problemy teorii i praktyki*, ed. T. Wallas, Poznań 2003, p. 8-9.

and develops the whole life of the nation.”²⁴ In the case of the Third Reich there was not such positively-valued attitude to the notions of “totalitarianism” or “totalitarian”. One can find some references to this term in the conception of “total revolution” of Goebbels or in “total state of power” of Carl Schmitt, but Hitler himself preferred to use a notion of the authoritarian state. In both cases, “totalitarianism” had a positive value. One can notice the reversal of this approach in different publications edited before the outbreak of World War II. The knowledge on these systems developed after 1945 as a result of the surge of interest on the topic among scholars. This attitude contributed to numerous academic papers in the area of the theory and functioning of the totalitarian state. Due to the interest, as well as controversy, related to attempts at an unambiguous depiction of complex phenomena and processes shaping totalitarian state, a broad range of definitions of totalitarianism, stressing its different elements, has been built. In this paper, an analysis of the Third Reich’s system will be conducted on the basis of the definition adopted by Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzeziński, as it focuses on the particular features of totalitarian system, so that it can be used as a clear analytical matrix.

Friedrich and Brzeziński presented their conception of totalitarianism in their publication entitled *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, which was published in 1956. The authors state that one can speak about a totalitarian state provided six specific factors appear:

1. One official state ideology determining all the aspects of human existence;

²⁴ M. Bankowicz, W. Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, *Dyktatury i tyranie. Szkice o niedemokratycznej władzy*, Kraków 2007, p. 191.

2. Political system based on the one mass political Party, headed by a leader equipped with attributes of a dictator, who is superior to the state organs or unified with them entirely;
3. Developed system of police control (using terror methods) against the society;
4. Monopoly of the Party regarding the activity of all mass media;
5. Total control by the Party over the coercive measures;
6. Centrally planned economy.²⁵

The specific elements are analyzed below in the context of the development of the political system of the Nazi Germany.

Nazi ideology and its assumptions

The basis of the totalitarian system of the Third Reich was formed by the Nazi ideology which was a kind of conglomerate of various outlooks encompassing not only the macro-level of the society, but also the micro-dimension of individuals, their functioning in the society, but also within the framework of the primary communities. The Nazi ideology was constructed on the basis of the Hitler's views articulated by him in his *Mein Kampf*. They resulted from the rejection of the democratic principle of equality of human beings as well as from the assumption that life is a permanent battle for subsistence and domination. Under Nazi rule, the hierarchically ordered society was mirrored by the political system created in the Third Reich. Hitler adopted the Darwinist perspective in assessing the society and its relations with other entities of this kind. The German nation seen as *Volksgemeinschaft* constituted an ideological unity and its interest was formulated by the will of the linchpin of Nazi Germany – its charismatic

²⁵ *Ibidem.*

leader, who was supposed to provide Germany with the most profitable conditions for growth. The definition of collective societies on the basis of ethnic criteria stemmed from the conviction that races were forces of history. The racist ideology of Hitler – which was supported by pseudo-scientist criteria – assumed that at the moment when the race of Germans would gain the power over the other races, there would emerge a basis for new appropriate conditions for the elimination of “worse groups”, that often were described in categories of enemies. In the category of the enemies, Jews were rated as the first of all. They were presented by the Nazis as sub-humans. During World War II that anti-Semitism took a more radical form in the framework of the action for the “final solution”. As one can presume, despite the anti-Semitic atmosphere prevailing in the German society, this decision was taken by Hitler independently.²⁶ The racist outlooks were implemented in the form of law made by the state. In 1935, the Reichstag passed so called “Nuremberg laws” that included, among other things, a law on citizenship of the Reich and on protection of German blood and honour. They served as the legal basis for gradual depriving Jews of public rights. Nonetheless, racism had also second, less radical grounds: those of anti-Slavic character. The Slavs were not perceived as subhuman, but as a lower race. The aim of Hitler’s politics was not the physical extermination of the so-called lower groups, but the limitation of their possibilities of development, with the use of coercive measures. It was also the aim of the Nazi policy carried out in the territory of the Government General of Warsaw in the period from October 1939. The conviction about the superiority of the Germanic race and the necessity of its domination determined the pursuit for the acquisition of so-called living space for the

²⁶ H. Holborn, *Origins and Political Character of Nazi Ideology*, “Political Science Quarterly”, Vol. 79, No. 4 (Dec., 1964), p. 546-547.

German nation (germ. *Lebensraum*), that is, as a result translated into territorial claims towards neighbouring countries.

The rejection of the principle of equality affected not just political communities such as nations. The presumption that there were naturally determined inequalities was also applied on the ground of the family, which in the Nazi ideology became an entity supposed to assure the biological and cultural development of the Germanic race. Thus, separate roles were elaborated for males and females, who functioned in two different spheres. Hitler presented his opinions on this theme in 1934 in front of the female members of *Frauenschaft*, a Nazi organization for women, during the Day of the Party. He said that the state was a world of men, and the home – of women. These two spheres complemented each other, but were in permanent separation. With regard to this, women could not encroach the border and enter into men's world.²⁷ The Nazi ideology elaborated by Hitler and propagated in his speeches determined every aspect of the life of males and females in the Third Reich. Women were responsible for giving birth to children which was a guarantee of the preservation of the Aryan race. This task was presented as a struggle, which – in the political dimension – was attributed to men. Aryan women were to take care of maintaining the purity of race. They were to select their partners in accordance with the criterion of Aryanism. Thus, they were called to take into consideration the health of a future spouse, as well as his descent through examination of a genealogical tree of his family. Women were to play the role of guards of the German culture and protect it from alien influences. That was why

²⁷ L.J. Rupp, *Mother of the „Volk”: the Image of Women In Nazi Ideology*, “Signs”, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Winter, 1977), p. 362-363.

they were supposed to equip their households with German furniture, cook German dishes, sing German songs and wear German clothes.²⁸

Single-Party political system

With regard to the political system, one needs to take into consideration two institutions: the Party and its leader, as they are a distinctive element of a totalitarian system. In this case, there is a similarity between Nazism and Communism. The leading role in the society of the Third Reich was given to National Socialist German Worker's Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, NSDAP), which was established in 1919. It was responsible for controlling every aspect of life of individuals in accordance with the principles of the Nazi ideology. The functions of the Party were described by Hitler, who in 1937 said that only the Party was entitled to "lead the nation as it is every single man and every single woman."²⁹ Two years earlier he stated that the Party had to "conserve eternally living ideas of national-socialist science," bring up the nation in conformity with these ideas, as well as train the staff³⁰.

The above statements are not a sign that the ideas which were to be implemented in the society were elaborated in the framework of any form of debate or compromise achieved among the Party members. The Party structure was centralized. It was headed by a charismatic leader, whose role was elaborated by Hitler: "The leader and idea are the one and every member of the Party has to do what is told by the leader. The leader is an embodiment of the idea and only he knows its ultimate goal."³¹ In this

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 372.

²⁹ R. Bäcker, *Totalitaryzm. Geneza, istota, upadek*, Toruń 1992, p. 30.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ B. Olszewska-Dyoniziak, *Antropologia totalitaryzmu europejskiego XX wieku*, Wrocław 1999, p. 69.

depiction (in the context of the relation the Party – leader), the role of the Party was reduced to the role of a conductor of the leader's will and control of its execution.

NSDAP was a mass party. The number of its members augmented when the Party took over. Before the 30th January 1933, the Party had 850, 000 members. In its climactic moment, this number amounted to 8 million supporters. This is almost every fourth German adult enrolled on the list of the Party members. Membership in the Party assured a privileged position in access to civil functions. After NSDAP had gained the power, a practice of filling the administrative and municipal positions with persons who possessed a membership card of NSDAP was implemented. Moreover, the system of this "induction" was conditioned by the position that the given person was occupying in the hierarchical structure of the Party. This mechanism functioned until 1935. The presented method of offering the positions in public administration was facilitated because of the general scheme of doubling functions in the Party and administration. In this relationship, the Party functionary was superior to the administrative one.³² In that way, these two systems were not unified but the state organs were subordinated to NSDAP.

System of police control: its tools and connections with the Party

Hitler's state was based on complex police state machinery, which was to play a significant role, especially in the sphere of intrastate social relations. According to Franciszek Ryszka, the political police "executed the tasks attributed to the administration of NSDAP in a self-contained sphere"³³ that resulted in close institutional connections between the organs of the

³² R. Bäcker, *op. cit.*, p. 36-37.

³³ F. Ryszka, *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego*, Wrocław 1974, p. 301.

Party and the political police. In reality, one can speak of the police's dependence on the Party, which is visible especially on the example of the SS.

In January 1933, the Nazis were gaining the power over a state, where there were multiple institutional divergences because of its territorial structure. One of the aims of the new rulers was to establish an identical political system throughout the country, following the principle of “harmonization” – *Gleichschaltung*. This process also involved the police that became a significant pillar of the implementation of the Nazi ideology as well as social control and subordination of the citizens to the state of power. The unified police system was based on two sectors: secret police state machinery whose hard core was constituted by the Prussian political police and the security service (SS and its raiding parties). The system of police control in the Third Reich was not implemented in a parallel way. The first federal states in which the administration was adapted to the new assumptions were Prussia and Bavaria. The Secret State Police (Gestapo) – the first of the sectors mentioned above, was formally created by virtue of the Prussian act of 30 November 1933. According to this law, Gestapo was subordinated directly to the power of the Prussian state ministry which was headed by Herman Göring. The document did not specify precisely the functions of the secret police, albeit it marked that it should accumulate all the affairs in the range of political police, assigned to the competence areas of administrative organs of internal affairs and general administration. The role of the Gestapo was elaborated in detail in the executive decree of 8th March 1934. By its virtue, a structure of authority over the territorial political police entities was established. It stipulated that all of them were submitted to Heinrich Himmler, performing a function of the Gestapo inspector. Similar political police offices were created in the other parts

of the country by 1935.³⁴ The tasks of the Gestapo were more precisely outlined by virtue of a later act (of 10th February 1936) which transformed the secret police into a separate administrative section. The document indicated new tasks for the Gestapo: fighting anti-state activities and tracking them, as well as providing the government with information concerning the plans and possibilities of undertakings by the opposition. Moreover, the Gestapo became independent from administrative courts.³⁵

The second section – the SS, i.e. the Protection Squadron (*Schutzstaffel*) was created in 1925. It derived from other security services which had fulfilled the role of Hitler's personal security guards and security of the rooms where the gatherings of the NSDAP members were held. Except from the Gestapo and SS, one also needs to mention the *SS-Totenkopfverbände*, whose main task was the management of concentration camps. All these organizations used terrorist methods of operation. As Ryszka states, they were supposed to force the population into obedience through fear.³⁶ On the one hand, the fear was aroused by the very methods used, and on the other – by the myth of the enemy which was meticulously constructed on the basis of the Nazi ideas and socio-political events. With regard to the first mentioned factor, fear was fuelled by stories being passed around across the society and which concerned the activities of the Gestapo and SS. As Reinhard Heydrich, one of the high dignitaries of the political police, stated: "Gestapo and security police are shrouded in secrecy and political shiver. Our hidden enemies talk abroad with a mixture of fear and abhorrence about our brutality, and merciless, inhuman actions, imbued with sadism."³⁷

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 310-311.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 315-316.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 303.

³⁷ F. Ryszka, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

The use of terror was justified by the myth of the “stab-in-the-back” (*Dolchstoß*) during World War I, which led to the defeat and eventually to the imposition on Germany of the so called “Versailles dictate”. It was connected with the creation of the social division between “us” and “them”, where “they” were a menace to the state and society. The enemy was classified on the basis of some social categories. It had both real and imaginative character. It included especially communists, socialists and Jews.

One of the results of the terror was the prevalence of the phenomena of denunciation. In 1934, a drastic growth in denunciations was noted in comparison with the previous year. This attitude was highly approved by the government. Rudolf Hess, in one of his speeches, said that every German could address him and Hitler personally for the nation’s and the movement’s sake. The denunciations were made against family members and neighbours. Individuals spied on each other. There are documented denunciations of German women who accused their friends of buying potatoes on the black market, or listening of BBC.³⁸

The Party monopoly in mass-media

The mass-media in the Third Reich played a crucial role in shaping new consciousness of individuals. The centralization of the mass-media system and its close adherence to the guidelines of the Party was also aimed at creation of a new citizen. Generally, all the mass-media realized the propaganda goals specified by NSDAP with a decisive role played by Adolf Hitler. He presented the methods of using propaganda on the basis of the assumption concerning the limited “capacities of receiving and

³⁸ B. Olszewska-Dyoniziak, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

understanding the political content by the masses.”³⁹ Thus, he underlined that propaganda must only sporadically appeal to intellect and should focus on emotions. He said that efficient propaganda does not embrace more than just few points that must be presented in a defined form as long as “everyone will understand what one wants to say.”⁴⁰ This remark of Hitler’s was reflected in a slogan promoted by Goebbels that “a lie repeated one thousands of times will become truth,”⁴¹ which was based on a conviction that the society was lacking appropriate analytical competences regarding received messages and that its ability to adapt its attitudes to the promoted announcements stayed at an elementary level. One of the aims of thus-comprehended propaganda was the augmentation of submission of individuals who were becoming more susceptible to manipulation. Joseph Goebbels was responsible for the management of the propaganda system in the Third Reich. Since 1933, he held the position of the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, PROMI). At the same time, he was in charge of *Reichspropagandaleitung* (RPL), which was included in structures of NSDAP. This way of doubling positions shows how those in the Party were bound with civil positions. RPL consisted of branches in charge of a particular medium (press, movies, radio) along with a training branch (school of speakers).⁴²

The Party, in order to implement these assumptions, used all the mass-media accessible. First of them was the radio, the potential of which was fast discovered by Goebbels. The radio gave new possibilities; the

³⁹ A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Kraków 1992; A. Pratkins, E. Aronson, *Wiek propagandy*, Warszawa 2013, p. 276.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 276-277.

⁴¹ <http://www.cytaty.info/cytat/klamstwopowtarzanetysiacrazy.htm>, (access 30.01.2014).

⁴² J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, Cambridge Massachusetts 2006, p. 21.

population could have the impression of having a direct contact with the leader. Thus, Hitler often used it for the transmission of his speeches. In order to make propaganda messages more accessible, cheap radio sets were put on the market. They gained popularity among the Germans. In 1932, 25% of German households were equipped with radio sets. That number grew in 1939 – to 70%.⁴³

The Party media affected the society extensively. “Völkischer Beobachter” can serve as an example. The newspaper was published in Munich and after 1938 – in Vienna. It broke the fragmentation of the media market. As in 1932, it got through to 127,000 readers. In 1941, it had a circulation of 1,192,600. As Richard Grunberger shows, the “Völkischer Beobachter” had features of a combat leaflet, not of a professional news bulletin. In conformity with Hitler’s assumptions, it appealed mainly to emotions.⁴⁴

Economy and state interests

In the Third Reich, there was no principle of nationalized production. Private ownership was allowed during the whole period of existence of the Third Reich. However, its economy was not a liberal one in the sense which was adopted in Western Europe. It was based on different axiological principles. In the case of Nazi economy, production was absolutely subordinated to the state and its key aim was to serve as a tool of enhancing the state’s power. Social welfare, and individual profits did not constitute autotelic values, but instruments to maximize the state’s strength. The principal rule which regulated the social relations was *Gemeinnutz geht vor*

⁴³ S. J. Lee, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, New York 1998, Chapter 4, Analysis 2.

⁴⁴ R. Grunberger, *Historia społeczna Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Warszawa 1987, p. 274-276.

Eigennutz, that is, subordination of private interests to those of the community.

Generally, after the Nazi had seized the power, they did not decide to introduce any profound changes into the German economy. In its development, one can identify three phases which were directed towards the enhancement of the state, but served reaching different direct goals. One of them is the period between 1933 and 1936. Then, the government was focused on overcoming the negative consequences of the financial crisis which sparked off at the turn of the 1930's. In the second phase (after 1936), the economic assumptions changed. The goal was to create the state of autarky, limit the economic dependence on import, and extend the production capacity. The slogan of autarky was defined by Hitler in his memorial in 1936. Economic self-sufficiency was also the goal of the Four Year Plan launched in the same year. In 1942, the economy entered a new phase. Then, it was oriented towards waging *total war*.⁴⁵

Conclusions

The political system of the Third Reich meets the criteria of a totalitarian state as comprehended by Brzeziński and Friedrich. In this system, the leading role was played by the Party headed by a charismatic leader. The Party regulated all the aspects of the society. Its main tool was an ideology created by the leader. The Party supported the actions of the leader, but also took part in the regulation of social relations by generating a culture of fear based on a complex system of terror which led to the atrophy of social bonds.

Concentration camps which functioned in the system till the beginning of World War II, were to play different functions. On the one

⁴⁵ R. Stackelberg, *The Routledge Companion to Nazi Germany*, London 2007, p. 127-130.

hand, they constituted means for elimination of the political enemies of the state (communists, socialists) and ethnic (Jews). On the other hand, information about the concentration camps that spread through the society was to serve as a preventive mean to control of people's behaviour. In the German language, this role was mirrored by the notion of *Schutzhaft*. It came into force by virtue of the decree of 28th February 1933 on the "protection of the nation and the state." During the War, the role of concentration camps evolved. Since then, they were a crucial instrument of the implementation of the *Endlösung* action.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ F. Ryszka, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

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The Third Reich as a Totalitarian State

The authority of the totalitarian state goes beyond mere political power, for its aim is to bring official ideology into effect. Therefore, it controls all aspects of the social life regarding freedom as the greatest threat to the regime. That ideology, guarded by the state apparatus, considers the world as the scene of struggle between arbitrarily defined good and evil.⁴⁷

The question of race became the core of Nazi worldview and state policy,⁴⁸ while racism itself became the state doctrine.⁴⁹ Alfred Rosenberg, called the leading ideologist of the Third Reich, was convinced that race was, above all, the reflection of the soul, rather than a simple biological category. Desecration of blood – incorrectly considered as a simple chemical formula – must lead to the annihilation of race and culture. According to Rosenberg, the myth of blood is a new faith awakening, based on “the belief that to defend the blood is also to defend the divine nature of man in general.”⁵⁰

The Jews were at the heart of the National-Socialist concept of race, since anti-Semitism constituted the most significant aspect of Adolf Hitler’s *Weltanschauung*, which interpreted history as a constant struggle of races and nations. Eventually, the Jews played a double role in Hitler’s ideology, namely, that of a scapegoat and that of a true enemy. Hitler perceived them

⁴⁷ See: M. Bankowicz, *Totalitaryzm w służbie ideologii* [In:] *Dyktatury i tyranie. Szkice o niedemokratycznej władzy*, ed. W. Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, M. Bankowicz, , Kraków 2007, p. 185-187.

⁴⁸ See: G.E. Schafft, *Od rasizmu do ludobójstwa. Antropologia w Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Kraków 2006, p. 190.

⁴⁹ See: H. Arendt, *Korzenie totalitaryzmu*. Warszawa 2008, p. 231.

⁵⁰ A. Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century. An Evaluation of the Spiritual Intellectual Confrontations of Our Age*, <http://www.archive.org/details/TheMythOfTheTwentiethCentury> (access 15.12.2013).

as a race of insincere people driven by impulses, unable to create culture and state, and therefore preying on other nations. What is more, even their religion was to be deprived of any metaphysical properties.⁵¹

Consequently, Adolf Hitler divided mankind into three categories: culture creators, culture bearers and culture destroyers – the Aryans were the only ones capable of creating anything of value. Thus, the fall of all the great civilisations occurred when their blood mixed with “inferior” races. Hitler concluded that “the Jew forms the strongest contrast to the Aryan”. Moreover, “any progress of mankind takes place not through him but in spite of him” because “the Jew ... was always only a parasite in the body of other peoples.”⁵² As a result, the only way to “purify” the German nation and culture from Jewish influence, and to ensure civilization growth, was to isolate hostile races.

	DEMOCRACY	TOTALITARIANISM	I D E O L O G Y
POLITICAL SYSTEM	1. equal participation in politics of all eligible citizens 2. separation of powers 3. political pluralism	1. unlimited political power – leader principle 2. concentration of power 3. one-party system, terror	
LAW	1. equal rights, non-discrimination 2. <i>lex retro non agit</i> (the law does not act retrospectively) 3. legal protection of life, health, property of all citizens	1. inequality before the law, legal discrimination 2. the law can act retrospectively 3. no legal protection of life, health, property of second-class citizens	
SOCIETY	1. media freedom and	1. state media, well-developed	

⁵¹ See: M. Maciejewski, *Rozważania nad znaczeniem antysemityzmu w ideologii Adolfa Hitlera* „Studia nad Faszyzmem i Zbrodniami Hitlerowskimi”, no. XVIII, p. 5-15.

⁵² A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*,

<http://www.archive.org/details/meinkampf035176mbp> (access 15.12.2013).

	pluralism, freedom of access to information	propaganda apparatus	
	2. freedom of conscience, belief, and speech	2. no freedom of conscience, belief, or speech	
	3. artistic freedom of expression	3. no artistic freedom of expression	
	4. freedom of association	4. compulsory membership	

A comparison between representative democracy and totalitarianism.

EXERCISES

The workshop participants should be divided into groups of 4-6. Each group should be represented by one person chosen by a teacher.

Exercise 1: political system

Approx. 20 minutes

1. Introduction

In the Third Reich, the traditional separation of powers was replaced with the leader principle, i.e. absolute obedience to the Führer, who exercised power in a radically antidemocratic way. On August 1, 1934 the offices of the President and Chancellor were merged. The very next day, due to Paul von Hindenburg's death, Hitler took the title of "Führer and Chancellor of the Reich." Thus, he began to exercise uncontrolled power according to the following rule: "the Führer is always right."⁵³

Suppression of political pluralism also facilitated consolidation of power. It was the NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) which

⁵³ See: W. Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, *Totalitaryzm i faszyzm* [In:] *Dyktatury i tyranie. Szkice o niedemokratycznej władzy*, ed. M. Bankowicz, W. Kozub-Ciembroniewicz, Kraków 2006, p. 35.

remained the only actor on the political scene, with Adolf Hitler as the leader. The party itself was announced “the bearer of state thinking and inseparably connected with the state.”⁵⁴

Obviously, the aforementioned model, accompanied by a complex terror apparatus, eliminated any diversity in the political sphere. Therefore, it enabled unlimited control of citizens, as well as facilitated the practice of the ideological concept of new Germany.

2. The aim and content of the exercise

Each group receives opinion-forming newspapers, weeklies etc. (representing different political views, ideas and value-systems). The students are also welcome to search the Internet (in particular on-line national press) while performing the task.

The aim of the exercise is to indicate:

- the main features of a democratic political system,
- the institutions that could not occur in a totalitarian state. Explain why. What could replace them?

Each group presents results. The teacher moderates a discussion and helps to reconstruct the essential characteristics of a totalitarian system of government.

Educational Objectives	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to perform a critical analysis of the text- to improve the participants' interest in the discussed topic

⁵⁴As cited in: F. Ryszka, *Państwo stanu wyjątkowego. Rzecz o systemie państwa i prawa w Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Wrocław 1985, p. 221.

Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to familiarise the participants with the topic's characteristics - to develop reading comprehension - to develop teamwork skills - to develop argumentation skills - to develop discussion skills
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Exercise 2: The Legal System

Approx. 20 minutes

1. Introduction

The Third Reich authorities aimed to maintain an appearance of lawfulness. However, the new legislation primarily legitimised previous political repression. What is more, it allowed the law to be applied retroactively, as opposed to commonly adopted rules.⁵⁵ From then on, law became a basic tool for ideological struggle. It discriminated anyone whose existence would “contaminate” German blood and therefore hinder *Volksgemeinschaft's* (“people's community”) development.

2. The aim and content of the exercise

Each group receives a passage from one of the following legislative acts:

1. Nuremberg Laws on Reich Citizenship, September 15, 1935⁵⁶ and the Reich Citizenship Law: First Regulation, November 14, 1935⁵⁷

“§2 (1) A Reich citizen is a subject of the State who is of German or related blood, who proves by his conduct that he is willing and fit faithfully to serve the German people and Reich ...

⁵⁵ See: F. Ryszka, *Op. cit.*, p. 203

⁵⁶ http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%201998.pdf (access 12.12.2013).

⁵⁷ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/nurmlaw4.html> (access 12.12.2013).

(3) The Reich citizen is the sole bearer of full political rights in accordance with the Law ...”

“§4 (1) A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He has no right to vote in political affairs and he cannot occupy public office ...

§5 (1) A Jew is anyone who is descended from at least three grandparents who are racially full Jews ...

(2) A Jew is also one who is descended from two full Jewish parents, if

a) he belonged to the Jewish religious community at the time this law was issued, or joined the community later,

b) he was married to a Jewish person, at the time the law was issued, or married one subsequently,

c) he is the offspring of a marriage with a Jew ... which was contracted after the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor became effective,

d) he is the offspring of an extramarital relationship with a Jew, according to Section I, and will be born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936 ...”

2. Nuremberg Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, September 15, 1935⁵⁸

“Moved by the understanding that purity of the German Blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people ... the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following Law, which is promulgated herewith:

§1 Marriages between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law ...

§2 Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood is forbidden.

§3 Jews may not employ in their household’s female subjects of the state of German or related blood who are under 45 years old ...”.

3. Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases (July 14, 1933)⁵⁹

⁵⁸ http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%201996.pdf (access 12.12.2013).

⁵⁹ *Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases*
http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=1521 (access 10.12.2013).

“§1 Anyone suffering from a hereditary disease can be sterilised by a surgical operation if, according to the experience of medical science, there is a high probability that his offspring will suffer from serious physical or mental defects of a hereditary nature. Anyone suffering from any of the following diseases is considered hereditarily diseased under this law: 1. Congenital mental deficiency, 2. Schizophrenia, 3. Manic-depression, 4. Hereditary epilepsy, 5. Hereditary St. Vitus’ Dance (Huntington’s Chorea), 6. Hereditary blindness, 7. Hereditary deafness, 8. Serious hereditary physical deformity. Furthermore, anyone suffering from chronic alcoholism can be sterilised.”

The exercise aims to indicate:

- the main characteristics of Nazi legislation and its ideological aims,
- the legal, political, and social status of citizens in the Third Reich.

Educational Objectives	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to perform a critical analysis of the text - to improve the participants’ interest in the discussed topic
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to familiarise the participants with the topic’s characteristics - to develop teamwork skills - to develop argumentation skills - to develop discussion skills

Exercise 3: Cultural Policy

Approx. 20 minutes

1. Introduction

The Nazis acted on the assumption that everything that is admirable in the world had been created by one race exclusively: the Aryans. Therefore, nothing designed by a member of the “Jewish anti-race” could be regarded as actual art. Furthermore, according to Hitler’s ideology, it should be eliminated forever.

The struggle for “German” music turned out to be exceptionally difficult. According to M.H. Kater, “quintessential elements ... were the triad, the tonal system, and the specifically <<Aryan>> rhythm as marked by the succession of weak and strong beat accentuations and the syncopations of Bach and Brahms. Motif repetitions in German music were said to be always sequential, moving from one level of intensity to a higher, more dramatic one.”⁶⁰ The authorities were negative about innovations in art⁶¹ – especially departures from tonality or traditional harmony, as well as creating and performing popular music, i.e. jazz.

Eventually, the fight against “Jewish” music turned out to be, to a large extent, a failure. The Nazis were able to identify the subject, in particular authors and performers, in order to assault them in any way. However, they could not define the object: all the features that might indicate “Jewishness” or “Germanness” in art.

2. The aim and content of the exercise

Students will hear 5 excerpts of musical works composed by German artists (approx. 90 seconds each + approx. 90-second discussion in groups), i.e.:

- R. Wagner - *Rienzi* Overture

Notice: to this day, R. Wagner is rightly considered a musical symbol of the Third Reich

- G. Mahler, *The Symphony No. 1 in D major*

Notice: G. Mahler was of Jewish descent, so performing his music in the Third Reich was forbidden.

- F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *Symphony No.5 in D major/D minor*
"Reformation"

⁶⁰ M.H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse. Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*, New York-Oxford 1997, p. 76.

⁶¹ See: T. Brodniewicz, *Za i przeciw hitleryzmowi – muzyka w Trzeciej Rzeszy*, [In:] *Muzyka i totalitaryzm*, ed. M. Jabłoński, J. Tatarska, Poznań 1996, p. 21.

Notice: F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was of Jewish descent, so performing his music in the Third Reich was forbidden.

- R. Strauss, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

Notice: R. Strauss was the first president of the Reich Music Chamber (1933-1935). He was accused of maintaining contact with people of Jewish descent and as a consequence he lost his office. However, he remained a highly regarded artist in the Third Reich.

- G.F. Haendel, *Messiah*, the *Hallelujah chorus*

Notice: G.F. Haendel was performed in the Third Reich. However, the fact that his works referred to the Old Testament was a source of controversy.

The exercise aims to indicate which of musical works might have been condemned in the Third Reich. Explain why.

The teacher presents each composer's biography and explains why some of them were praised while others were censored.

The aim of the exercise is to show the absurdity of seeing art from the perspective of an ideology.

Educational Objectives	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to perform a critical analysis of the text- to improve the participants' interest in the discussed topic
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- to familiarise the participants with the topic's characteristics- to develop teamwork skills- to develop argumentation skills- to develop discussion skills

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Sites of Memory, Exhibition, Monument and Anti-Monument – the Intro to Theories of Memory

The workshop's goal was to familiarize participants with particular theories of memory but also help them apply those theories to the local material heritage of Lesser Poland and city of Kraków on the case studies. The workshop gave the solid information about history but also was starting point for discussion on memory and commemoration in space which is well known to the participants and therefore closest to them.

The memory is an ability to record the events, emotions and information.⁶² Such ability have people, animals and computers. We can differentiate between individual and collective memory. According to Maurice Halbwachs, French sociologist and author of *The Collective Memory* – considered today as classic one in field of social science, the memory is essential for creation of group identity through such means as process of socialization and intergroup transfer of values and information. Collective memory is reconstruction of past based on clues and formulas given by the community. Halbwachs distinguished 3 functions of memory. First of all it creates a bound and the group identity. It also serves for transfer of patterns and values from generation to generation as well as legitimization of the one who are in power.⁶³

The term of memory was often used in intuitive ways. In 70's of 20th century we have to do with the renaissance of history and memory. This is the time when the generation which was born after World War II started

⁶² *Nowy Słownik Poprawnej Polszczyzny PWN*, ed. A. Markowski, Warszawa 2003, p. 633.

⁶³ F. Pazderski, *Czemu przeszłość się pamięta – wokół dyskursu na temat kształtowania się pamięci zbiorowej*, Drumla – Nasza Czytelnia, tekst nr 2, p. 5, <http://www.tok.hajnówka.com.pl/slowa/pazderski.pdf> (access 25.11.2013); M. Halbwachs, *Spoleczne ramy pamięci*, Warszawa 1969.

to be interested in their parents past by asking difficult and inconvenient questions about wartime. French historian Pierre Nora named this process as “memory revolt”. Nora is well known as an author of term “sites of memory”. According to him those are places where community’s memory is crystallized and where the community treasures its memorabilia. Nora enumerates such places as: archives, libraries, museums, monuments, cemeteries, memorial days and curricula.⁶⁴

The creation of such places was possible thanks to the collapse of traditional communities in which the history and memory was the same thing. Now a history and memory are on two opposite sites. The history has to be the representation of past, is characterized by time continuity and claims its universal authority. On the other hand memory links the members of one’s group with never-ending presence by putting all memories in sacrum sphere and in contrast to relative history is absolute. The new memory is compared to archival memory. The people are obsessed on past and they aim to save its all. Recently every person is obliged to remember and collections are created not only by distinguished dynasties, Church or state but by ordinary people.⁶⁵

Another theory is idea given by Charles S. Maier. He claims that modern memory cannot be universal. The collective memory is created in process of collective remembering the history. Such process is present most of the time in groups which Maier calls the communities of memory. He claims that the members of one community of memory cannot sympathize or understand the members of another community of memory.

⁶⁴ A. Szpociński, *Miejsca pamięci*, „Teksty Drugie”, nr 4/2008, p. 11-20, http://tslmorawa.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/konwersatorium-rs_mk_szpocinski_miejsca-pamieci.pdf (access 25.11.2013).

⁶⁵ P. Nora, *Between Memory and History*, “Representations” 26, 1989, <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/faculty/marcuse/classes/201/articles/89NoraLieuxIntroRepresentations.pdf> (access 25.11.2013).

The boundaries between those are impossible to overcome. For example the victims of fascism and bolshevism live in two separate communities of memory. Based on this concept we could start asking questions about the theme of comparing the suffering during World WarII.⁶⁶

The collective memory is also present in public sphere. This topic was present in many books of James E. Young – professor of University of Massachussets. He is the author of term ”anti-monument” and the same he rejected the classical form of monument which he saw as retreat from memory. Young explains that the classic monument captures the memory in material, static and didactic form and by this release us from the responsibility of remembering the past. Anti-monument on the contrary is incomplete and by creating the feeling of discomfort he invites the people for activity and participation. Thanks to the anti-monuments we have possibility to rework the past all over again and again.

The theories mentioned above are one of many and it is decision of the person who is leading the workshop which one to choose.

During the workshop teacher divided the students into 3 groups. Every group got photo of architectonic object as well as questions to it. Additionally they got the short text connected with those objects which supposed to help them in answering to those questions. Before the dissuasion the teacher gave some information about theories of memory. The discussion itself lasted up to 30 minutes. Later every group was asked to read the question given and answer they have prepared.

In the workshop students had opportunity to get to know the material heritage of Lesser Poland and city of Krakow. The object they had on the photographs were: site of memory – Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum at the place of former Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-

⁶⁶ C.S. Maier, *Gorąca pamięć... zimna pamięć*, „Res Publika Nowa” 2001.

Birkenau, the memorial on Square of Ghetto Heroes and monument by Władysław Cęckiewicz in former concentration Nazi camp Płaszów and Exhibition „Kraków under Occupation 1939-1945” at Historical Museum of City of Kraków.

During the workshop students could practice the ability to read the text carefully, prepare the presentation based on questions and tasks as well as defend one's stand and give arguments. The meeting was the opportunity not only to learn about the theories of memory but talk about the local heritage from times of World War II.

Appendix – Questions

Group 1

Site of Memory – Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum at the place of former Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau

1. Can Auschwitz-Birkenau be considered as symbol of the Holocaust and if yes why?
2. How is the message about the Holocaust presented in the museum? (the authenticity of the place, objects, ways of visiting etc.)
3. Is exposing the parts of the body (hairs) or personal possession of victims moral and appropriate?

Group 2

Monuments and anti-monuments – the comparison of the memorial on Square of Ghetto Heroes and Monument by Władysław Cęckiewicz in former concentration Nazi camp Płaszów?

1. What are the differences between those two memorials?
2. Which one is better representation dealing with Holocaust and why?

3. Is it possible to avoid the danger of „closing the memory” by creating the monuments?

Group 3

Museum – Historical Museum of City of Kraków, Schindler’s Factory, Exhibition „Kraków under Occupation 1939-1945”

1. What are the themes of exhibition?
2. By what means the narration about the Holocaust is presented in this museum (the types of objects, the way of storytelling, multimedia etc.). Name advantages and disadvantages.
3. Who has the right to create the memory in the museums? What are the dangers with the abuse of such rights?

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Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Photo by Krzysztof Suszkiewicz



Płaszów – former Nazi concentration camp.

Photo by Krzysztof Suszkiewicz



Monument by Władysław Cęckiewicz in former Nazi concentration camp
Płaszów. Photo by Krzysztof Suszkiewicz



Entrance to the Museum – Historical Museum of City of Kraków, Schindler's Factory. Photo by Krzysztof Suszkiewicz

Reflections on the meaning of concentration camps in totalitarian systems, and its impact on the faith of children from KL Auschwitz

The present text is a summary of a workshop conducted with high school students, which took place in October 2013 in Krakow. The activities, apart from an introductory lecture, also included a meeting with a first-hand witness. A former concentration camp prisoner, Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz, shared with the participants about her incredible ordeal in one of the children's barracks in Auschwitz-Birkenau. She survived for 15 months despite the fact she was subjected to numerous pseudo-medical experiments. Moreover, she also talked about her life in a foster family following her liberation from the camp. The objective of the following essay is not solely to encourage one to organize various meetings with witnesses of history, but also to illustrate the knowledge of historical facts and to provide guidance on the existing literature on the subject.

Due to the considerable time passed and decreasing amount of people who could still recall and share their recollections of life during World War II, more frequently audio or recorded memories shared by particular individuals or written memoirs are utilized. An adequate assortment of materials plays a big role (the texts presented to workshop participants should rather be short and on a specific subject matter or should describe a specific situation/experience).⁶⁷ What kinds of benefits are available through working with witnesses of history or through nurturing of relations

⁶⁷ Examples: H. Birenbaum, *Nadzieja umiera ostatnia. Wyprowa w przeszłość*, Oświęcim 2009; L. Primo, *Czy to jest człowiek*, Kraków 2008; W. Brasse, *Fotograf 3444 Auschwitz 1940-1945*, Kraków 2011 (with an included CD). A vast selection of memoirs offers, among others, the book store in the National Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim. Another option is the collection of USC Shoah Foundation. It is a Steven Spielberg Foundation which mainly in 1990s conducted over 50,000 interviews (around 2-4 hours each) with the survivors of the Holocaust from all around the world. A considerable amount of these interviews is available on www.youtube.com.

with the survivors? Within the context of a school setting, foremost an existing benefit is the ability to invoke sympathy and promote engagement among the students. An encounter with a live person and his experiences, or conducting work with authentic relations makes the students aware of the enormity of the Holocaust tragedy and World War II. In the case of face-to-face meetings or through the use of visual aides, the mimicking and gesticulation also serve an important educational function. In the framework of traditional classroom setting and/or a trip to the National Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the students acquire invaluable historical knowledge and get acquainted with facts and figures. Working with the testimony of survivors should be based upon a basic sound amount of knowledge on the Holocaust and concentration camps. The following short text can serve educators only as a guideline on what is worth reminding students about within the scope of this subject matter.

Remembering Auschwitz- Remembering about the Holocaust

In the last years of KL Auschwitz it came an international symbol of the Holocaust and surely the most known of all the concentration camps from the time of the Third Reich. The faith of majority of Jews brought to Auschwitz in the years 1942-1945 is widely known and remembered not only in Poland and Germany, but in other parts of the world. In the years 1942-1945 around a million Jews lost their lives.⁶⁸ In Poland, especially the principal camp, Auschwitz I, is associated as a place of remembrance of the

⁶⁸ Official estimates call for around 1 million Jewish victims from different European countries, around 70-75,000 Poles, 21,000 Romas, 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war and around 15,000 prisoners of other nationalities (see: B. Distel, *Auschwitz*, [In:] *Der Ort des Terrors. Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager* – t.5 Hinzert, Auschwitz, Neuengamme, Munich 2007.

deaths of several tens of thousands of political prisoners - many Poles as well as the martyrdom of St. Maksymilian Kolbe.

In the framework of school coursework, why is it worth talking about Auschwitz and other concentration camps? Why is important to invest time and energy to acquaint the students with the terrible facts of the period between 1933 and 1945, as well as the terror of the national socialist system in Germany? Although today's generation of high school students lives in diametrically different reality than the victims of the Nazi regime 70 years ago, and although the students rarely encounter a person who still recalls the war in their family circles, the passing of knowledge about the circumstances that took place then are important on three accounts. Firstly, to give homage to those who have died is a part of our culture. During important anniversaries, candles are lit, flowers are laid and speeches are given to commemorate those who have fallen. The United Nations honors the victims of this torture with an International Holocaust Remembrance Day celebrated on the 27th of January- in the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp.

An additional reason is the awareness that those past events hold a significant meaning for those living today. Foremost, in the history of mankind the state authorities radically and with all consequences divided people amongst those they considered human and those they saw as subhuman. Although the Holocaust was not the first example of genocide, it was the first time that factories of death were created - whole concentration camp complexes, with the sole purpose of killing as many amounts of people in the shortest amount of time, while exploiting their possessions such as clothing, valuables and even hair. The purposeful dehumanization of people (assigning them numbers instead of using their last names, systematic starvation, exhausting roll-calls, regular selection and

terrible pseudo-medical experiments) should be undoubtedly considered as human rights in modern European civilization. It is therefore worth encouraging the students to reflect on the scope of the national socialist crimes: What does Auschwitz and the Holocaust tell us about the capabilities of human beings? Based on such realization, shouldn't we concern ourselves whether certain basic rights and rules should unconditionally be upheld and abided by? What was the basis for the Jewish extermination, persecution and mass murder of other groups such as the Poles, Roma, communists, Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals and others? How could such enormous hate come to exist? In what ways did the stereotypes, assumptions, anti-Semitism and the contempt for others who differed culturally or physically, transform themselves into real threat for the peace of today's world? In what ways are ethnic, political, religious and sexual minorities being treated today? A visit in the National Museum of Auschwitz - Birkenau in Oświęcim constitutes a mandatory visit throughout their school education. Usually a visit to a place of homage takes places in junior high school, which takes under account the difficult age of the students and thusly a deeper need to emotionally prepare the students for the upcoming sightseeing is required.

The Nazi concentration camp system 1933-1945. The role of Auschwitz

An exact amount of old concentration camps, places of execution and ghettos where populations were tortured during the Third Reich to this day is unknown. Wolfgang Benz states that only in what today is the Republic of Poland there was almost 6,000 of such places.⁶⁹

Just the word 'camp' hides many various meanings; from forced labor camps for Jews, to transient camps for Polish population, to punitive camps created

⁶⁹ W. Benz, *Die Organisation des Terrors*, [In:] W. Benz, B. Distel, *Der Ort des Terrors – Geschichte der nationalsozialistischen Konzentrationslager*, t. 1, Munich 2005, p. 12.

solely for prisoners and finally to death camps.⁷⁰ According to the most recent estimates of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. there was more 42, 500 functioning ghettos and camps.⁷¹

In order to understand how such a gigantic death plant, such as the portion of the Auschwitz camp in Brzezinka came to exist in the years 1942-1944, it is imperative to go back in time to the time prior to the war. The first concentration camps were created just few weeks after Adolf Hitler seized power on January 30th, 1933. After the fire in the Reichstag, the Chancellor Hitler, for an undetermined period of time, through a special decree, deferred a variety of most important civil rights, such as the freedom of assembly, the right to keep correspondence private as well as the right to personal immunity as well as that of one's property. On the basis of the so called 'protective custody', the right to carry out arbitrary arrest on citizens and detaining them for several weeks, if there was any concern they constitute 'harm to the nation'. There was no requirement for any court-mandated order or an official investigation, plain suspicion was deemed enough. It was therefore permitted to arrest anyone without just cause and without retribution. Moreover, for a certain amount of time, it was possible to isolate political opponents and unwanted units for several weeks. Already in March of 1933 there was a series of provisional camps and places of detention created, although initially they were disorganized and rather chaotic. The first large camp was the KL Dachau, which was established in March of 1933, and within which a camp guideline was created that outlined things like punishment, identification of prisoners. This guideline was later used in all other camps.

⁷⁰ Outside of KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau there are also other concentration camps such as KL Majdanek as well as the camps in Treblinka, Sobibor, Bełżec and Chełm nad Nerem.

⁷¹ It deals with extensive publication of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum entitled the Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos 1933-1945.

The first direct victims of Hitler's reign of terror, contrary to common belief, were not citizens of Jewish origins, but rather German communists and social democrats. After Hitler seized power and the Third Reich was created in Germany, an imperative and instrumental objective became the stabilization of authority and the suppression of all opposing views. Already in March of 1933 the communist party KPD was forced to shut down and massive arrests of deputies and sympathizers took place. The totalitarian system could not exist without terror and without the demand for unitary thinking and citizen conduct.

At this stage it is also equally important to make students aware what is parliamentary democracy and in what way does a totalitarian system contradict it. From 1934 German authorities gradually standardized the regulations with regards to protective custody. The official definition from 1938 made the concept of protective custody understood as a "secret state police sanction" imposed on people who "through their behavior threaten the existence and security of the nation and the State", as a result detention could last as long as it was deemed necessary.⁷² This regulation allowed the political police in essence a free hand to detain unwanted units in the concentration camps without the prospect of ever being released.

After Hitler's regime became stabilized in 1934 and following a complete consolidation of power, a gradual expansion of the concept of enemies came about, and the expansion of the concentration camp system under the banner *Inspektion der Konzentrationslager* (Inspection of the Concentration Camps). It is worth mentioning at least the three of the biggest camps:

⁷² W. Benz, *Die Geschichte des Dritten Reiches*, Munich, 2000, p. 113.

in 1936 KL Sachsenhausen was created a year later KL Ravensbrueck (for women) and in 1938 KL Buchenwald was established. The propaganda behind the objective was to cleanse the nation and reduce the amount of units posing a threat to the system. The role of propaganda was important, because the existence of these camps and the torture conducted within was generally known by average German citizens and the media. With the expansion of the notion of enemies from political opponents to the so-called "asocial", as well as citizens who were repeatedly punished were also categorized according, such as: KL Auschwitz 'career criminals' (green corner), 'asocial prisoner' (black), political prisoners (red), researchers on the Holy Scripture (Jehovah Witness – purple corner), homosexuals (pink) and Jews (yellow Star of David).

In the years 1933-1939 the camps held mostly German citizens ('Aryans'), who were considered pests of the regime. The situation changed however diametrically after the outbreak of the war. Already after the first few months of the World War II, after the occupation of eastern lands of pre-war Second Republic of Poland (Interwar Poland) a problem arose due to the lack of space in local jails for more and more Poles arrested accused of collaborating with the resistance movement. The Auschwitz concentration camp was created in late spring 1940 in old military barracks, on the terrain that became a part of the Reich following Nazi Germany attack on Poland.⁷³ In the period between 1940-1941 the only prisoners in the camp initially were Polish political prisoners. The situation changed, along with the arrival of several thousand Soviet prisoners of war in the second half of 1941, and following the opening of another camp only 3 km away from Oświęcim in the village of Brzezinka, making Auschwitz one of the

⁷³ Extensive five volume monograph dealing with the various aspects of life and death in the Auschwitz concentration camp is available in the libraries: W. Długoborski, F. Piper, *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Węzłowe zagadnienia z historii obozu*, t. 1-5, Oświęcim 1999.

main centers of extermination of European Jewry (from spring of 1942). From March 1942 Auschwitz also contained female prisoners. In 1944 KL Auschwitz was comprised of three main camps (KL Auschwitz I, KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau as well as KL Auschwitz III-Monowice) as well as more than 40 sub-camps within Upper Silesia, mainly in factories and mines.

KL Auschwitz was not only the biggest camp complex, but it also connected three main functions which fulfilled the role of the concentration camps with the Nazi system: that of a labor camp (the biggest 'employer' was I.G. Farbenindustrie AG company in Monowice); a detention center for the enemies of the regime (especially the main camp Auschwitz I) as well as a death camp (especially Auschwitz II-Birkenau). Besides men and women who made their way to Auschwitz, there were also many thousands of children from different nationalities.

The children of Auschwitz

Based on surviving documents it is estimated that the number of children and youth under the age of 18, deported to KL Auschwitz was at least around 232, 000.⁷⁴ Majority of these children were Jewish, who were murdered in the gas chambers.⁷⁵ Thinking about the role of children in today's society, undauntedly they are considered a treasure; they are required to receive help, care and protection as they are considered defenseless and innocent beings. The obligation of society is to provide an conducive environment for their development - as well and especially

⁷⁴ H. Kubica, *Kinder und Jugendliche in KL Auschwitz*, w: W. Długoborski, F. Piper, *Auschwitz 1940-1945. Studien zur Geschichte des Konzentrations- und Vernichtungslagers Auschwitz*, t.2, Oświęcim 1999 p. 254.

⁷⁵ Official estimates of the National Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau state that more than 216 000 Jews, and more than 11 000 Roma children as well as several thousands of young Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Poles and others(H. Kubica, *Kinder...., op. cit.*, p. 255).

to those whose parents are unable to do so themselves. This fundamental civil responsibility in Auschwitz was completely disturbed. There was an absolute and complete denial of all norms and patterns of behavior that today are deemed obvious, rational and irrefutable. Already in the Third Reich from 1933, on a large scale children and youth were thought to hate others based on their race, or instill intolerance, disregard for the sick and handicapped. This was the basis of the totalitarian system: the State disregarded and trespassed into the privacy of its citizens, actively intruding into the manner with which children were being raised (not only in overlooking the educational curriculum, but also in daily family life) and instilling in the young their ideals and convictions.⁷⁶

Besides Jewish and Roma children, along with their entire families detained in Auschwitz in the so called *Zigeuner-Familienlager* (Roma family camps) there were also Polish and Byelorussian children deported as well. Majority of the Polish children ended up in Auschwitz at the end of 1942 during a forced displacement from Zamojszczyzna⁷⁷ and a brutal attempt to 'Germanize' this region. The following large group of Polish children found themselves in Auschwitz-Birkenau after the Warsaw Uprising and the resulting large scale arrests of Polish civilians from a destroyed capital. Another group of children came from areas of present-day Byelorussia. It was noted in the years between 1943 and 1944 there were several shipments of non-Jewish population from Vitebsk and Minsk, among whose there were also children⁷⁸ - among those children there were also

⁷⁶ About the role of propaganda in the life of German society writes, among others, Peter Fritzsche in his book *Life and Death in the Third Reich*, Kraków 2010.

⁷⁷ Publication on the above subject: H. Kubica, *Zagłada w KL Auschwitz Polaków wysiedlonych z Zamojszczyzny w latach 1942-1943*, Oświęcim/Warsaw 2004.

⁷⁸ According to Helena Kubica, among others in a transport from Vitebsk to KL Auschwitz on the 9th of September 1943 among those imprisoned there was at least 468 children and

many small children as well as infants. On such a transport on the 4th of December 1943, a three-year old Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz arrived to the camp.

Children under the age of 14, if left alive, at the end of 1943 were separated from their mothers who were detained at a women's camp in Birkenau. Small children (usually from 2 until 14) were left alive solely for pseudo-medical experiments which were conducted by, among others, an SS doctor Josef Mengele.⁷⁹

From time to time a special selection took place in search for non-Jewish children who possessed a 'Nordic' appearance, who were then transferred to a transient camp in Łódź or Potulice, and then, in order to 'Germanize' them, to a Nazi organization 'Lebensborn'.⁸⁰ Every morning children were forced to stand for several hours during a roll-call. The rest of the day was spent in the barracks without care. Food rations were the same as for adult prisoners. Skibicka-Maksymowicz recalls: 'There was no talking, playing, games, laughter, or frolicking. In the barracks only small animals existed - frightened and hungry. We guided ourselves with our instincts; animal-like and self-preserving. (...). We slept on bare wooden cuts, with just a little bit of hay. We covered ourselves with smelly and lice-infested blankets. There were rats running on top of us, and if somebody had diarrhea he conducted his business inside the barrack.'⁸¹

teenagers; in the shipment from December 4, 1943 from Minsk there was at least 60 children (29 girls and 31 boys) – H. Kubica, , *Kinder...* p. 266/267.

⁷⁹ Further information regarding the activities of Dr Josef Mengele are available in, among others, in the memoirs of a former prisoner M. Nyszli, *Byłem asystentem doktora Mengele*, Oświęcim 2000, as well as another publication by E. Klee, *Medycyna III Rzeszy i jej ofiary*, Kraków 2005.

⁸⁰ H. Kubica, *Kinder...*, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

⁸¹ An interview with Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz in the Krakow Gazette, from October 11, 2013 („*Nic nie odda tego, jak cierpi dziecko, kiedy traci mamę*”).

Very painful pseudo-medical experiments conducted on children very often resulted in their death. Among others things, children were injected a form of a bacteria, after which numerous tests were conducted in an effort to find a vaccine. Moreover, there was also an eye drop fluid tested which was supposed to change eye color to blue. In some cases, children were murdered following these experiments so that an autopsy could be performed.⁸² As a result of the horrendous unhygienic conditions - children were neither washed, nor changed- the pseudo-medical experiments, illnesses as well as exhaustion, the mortality rate among children was enormous. On the day the camp was liberated by the Red Army on the 27th of January 1945, the Soviet soldiers found more than 400 children under the age of 15 in the abandoned barracks in Birkenau as well as in the main camp.⁸³

How many of them died in the first weeks after the camp's liberation is impossible to say for sure. Some children were transferred to orphanages; other group of orphaned children were taken away and adopted by Poles from Oświęcim and surrounding villages. Skibicka-Maksymowicz was one of those children.

Final comments

In case of discussing such a difficult subject matter with students, apart from due reverie and paying of homage, is it worth taking a look a bit further and identify the scope of evil of the World War II. Peculiar perversion consisted mainly of violation of human dignity in all possible situations and to warp old, well-known social patterns. To provide an example, we can illustrate the role of doctors in concentration camps, who

⁸² H. Kubica, *Kinder...*, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, p. 341.

instead of helping patients, often in the name of experimentation condemned them to death. Students should understand the meaning of transnational legal norms and agreements to suppress future similar outbreaks of hatred.

Proposed activities

A class lesson utilizing photography and/or other forms of multimedia.

Working in groups using fragments of film or text.

A meeting with a witness of history.

Proposed home assignment

1. Write down your impressions and reflections, and engage in a group discussion at the next meeting.
2. A group presentation (2-3 people) on the selected memoirs of former prisoners w(based upon their memoirs and diaries).

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Translation: Monika Eriksen

Plunder of the Jewish Cultural Assets within the Context of Nazi Plunder of Works of Art in Krakow during the World War II

In summer of 1939 it was unimaginable what the next long six years would bring to the citizens of Poland, their cultural assets, and heritage. One of the first who took their collection out of Poland was the Jewish community of Danzig. During the spring of 1939, already suffering under cruel attacks from Nazi, they arranged shipment of their cultural assets that included that given in the 1904 collection of judaica by Lesser Geldziński, ritual objects from the Great Synagogue on Reitbahn and other objects donated by individuals shortly before the shipment. This collection arrived to New York on 26 of July 1939 for safe keeping at the Jewish Theological Seminary.⁸⁴ Another well-known exodus of works were those of Benjamin Mintz of Warsaw, who planned an exhibition of his judaica collection at the New York World's Fair that opened in April 1939. Even though the plans failed he succeed in saving his rich collection from Nazi hands.⁸⁵

Neglected to the last moment, were national collections of Warsaw, Krakow, and Katowice, which saw commencement of packing in August of 1939. In the late summer of 1939, the municipalities of Warsaw or Krakow ordered museums and art collectors to evacuate their treasures.⁸⁶ The noble families: the Czartoryski, the Tarnowski sent their artistic assets eastward, respectfully, to Sieniawa palace and the Lubomirski's palace

⁸⁴ *Danzig 1939. Treasures of a Destroyed Community: The Jewish Museum, New York.* G. Grass, V. B. Mann, Josef Gutman, Detroit, Michigan 1980, p. 9-10.

⁸⁵ S.L. Braunstein, *Luminous Art; Hanukkah Menorahs of the Jewish Museum*, New York 2004, p. 34-35.

⁸⁶ S. Lorentz, *Walka o dobra kultury; Warszawa 1939-1945*, Warszawa 1970, p. 13-14. S. Lorentz, *Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie w latach 1939-1954*, „Rocznik Muzeum Narodowego w Warszawie”, nr II, 1957, p. 8. *Kraków pod rządami wroga 1939-1945*, ed. J. Dąbrowski, Kraków 1946, p. 15.

in Lvov. Smaller private collectors secured their valuables mostly in the countryside. Some of them deposited their treasures in the hands of national museums' directors, such as, Stanisław Lorentz of Warsaw or Feliks Kopera of Krakow. Wawel Royal Castle requested the Vatican to store part of Jagiellonian tapestries. The Vatican refused. They were shipped by Batory and arrived to Canada in July of 1940. Also the Veit Stoss altarpiece was taken apart in August 1939, while monumental sculptures were sent by Vistula River to Sandomierz and hidden in the Theological college and the cathedral, the smaller pieces (predella) were stored in the University Museum of Krakow.⁸⁷

Jewish communities from the west regions of Poland also were sending their treasures into central Poland. For instances: Rabbi Simon Huberband wrote, how the community of Lipna in the Silesia sent their ritual silvers and other valuables to Piotrków Trybunalski.⁸⁸ Days before the German Invasion of Poland the National Museum in Krakow closed their Sukiennice gallery hiding more valuable collections.⁸⁹ All of these movements and preparations did little to thwart massive plunder. In considering the fate of Jewish cultural assets firstly it must be explained, how the plunder on the Polish occupied territory was processed and who were the main players in taking the spoils. Moreover, two key aspects must be understood:

- 1) General Nazi politics toward Polish national heritage that included Jewish assets, as Jews were integral part of Polish society, and

⁸⁷ *Cultural Losses of Poland, Index of Polish Cultural Losses during the German Occupation 1939-1944*, GK.164/47 t. 1, p. 249.

⁸⁸ S. Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish Religious and Cultural Life in Poland during the Holocaust*, New York, 1987, p. 5.

⁸⁹ A. Kopff, *Muzeum Narodowe w Krakowie. Historia i zbiory*. Kraków, 1962, p. 39.

- 2) Economical exploitation of the Jews, whom were condemned to extermination.

Thus, after the German invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939 *Reichführer SS* Heinrich Himmler at the request of *SS-Sturmbannführer* Wolfram Sievers, the head of *Das Ahnenerbe*, and with the consent of Reinhard Heydrich, a chief of RSHA, established special *Einsatzkommando des SD* for securing Polish works of art, historical monuments, archives, libraries, and archeological and ethnographical objects.⁹⁰ Himmler assigned Professor Peter Paulsen as a chief of the *kommando*, which primarily was active in Warsaw. But in October, Paulsen arrived in Krakow to constitute similar *kommando*, whereupon he had to acknowledge that professor Eduard Tratz, also a member of *Das Ahnenerbe*, had already commenced with the inspection Krakow museums' collections. Paulsen's report to Sievers informed about Kajetan Mühlmann's activities in Kraków.⁹¹

SS – Sturmabannführer Kajetan Mühlmann, professor of Art History in Vienna, was responsible for confiscation of Jewish assets in Austria after *Anschluss*, thus was appointed for this task in Krakow by Herman Goering; the chief of Four Year Plan.⁹² With the order of Adolph Hitler, the Führer of the Third Reich, *Das Generalgouvernement* was established which was announced on 26th of October 1939 with Dr. Hans Frank as its General Gubernator. On 28th of October 1939 in Krakow, a conference that divided

⁹⁰ E. Kobierska-Motas, *Działalność specjalnego pełnomocnika do spraw zabezpieczania dzieł sztuki i zabytków kultury w GG*, [In:] *Zbrodnie i sprawcy: ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii*, ed. C. Pilichowski, Warszawa 1980, p. 713-715; R. Fuks, St. Kania, *Grabież dzieł sztuki i niszczenie kultury polskiej*, [In:] *Zbrodnie i sprawcy: ludobójstwo hitlerowskie przed sądem ludzkości i historii*, ed. C. Pilichowski, Warszawa 1980, p. 694-698.

⁹¹ R. Fuks, St. Kania, *op. cit.*, p. 697.

⁹² GK.164/47 t.1 *Główna Komisja Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce. Akta ogólne w sprawie Mühlmann i tow. Kultura i Sztuka*, p. 229.

the competencies in “securing” works of art, took place. Heinrich Himmler was still responsible for “securing” the works of art but Hans Frank did not allow him for full control of the plunder of cultural assets in the GG territory (Krakow, Lublin, Warsaw, Radom districts).⁹³

Thus a struggle ensued:

- 1) On December 16th, 1939, Himmler issued an order to SiPO and SD commanders of GG and Polish territories annexed to Reich with the information: “... order confiscation Objects of artistic and cultural-historical value such as: pictures, sculptures, furniture, carpets and rugs, crystals, books, etc. Objects of interior design and decoration made of precious metals.”⁹⁴
- 2) On December 11th, 1939 Hans Frank established *Treuhandstelle für das Generalgouvernement*, and on 16th of December, he established the *Sonderbeauftragte für die Sicherung der Kunst und Kulturschatze im Generalgouvernement* (The General Trustee for Securing Art Works and Cultural Assets in General Government) headed by Kajetan Mühleman.⁹⁵ On 15th of January 1940, Mühlemann issued an order regarding confiscation of all the artistic assets made before 1850 including: “paintings, objects of art design (furniture, porcelain, glass, golden and silver objects, tapestries, carpets, embroideries, laces), drawings, graphics, prints, arms, armors, coins, medals, and any other objects of fine arts).”⁹⁶ Objects were collected in the Building of Jagiellonian Library and National Museum in Warsaw. By winter 1940, 69 crates from Warsaw were moved to Krakow. Here they were classified into 3 categories. The primary category

⁹³ R. Fuks, St. Kania, *op. cit.*, p. 698.

⁹⁴ *Ibidem.*, p. 702.

⁹⁵ GK. 164/47 t.1, p. 227-229.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem.*, p. 229.

of most important works was published in an elegant catalogue completed with photographs and detailed provenance of each object. It included *The Lady with an Ermine*, *The Portrait of a Young Man*, and *the Landscape with a Samaritan*.

Further plunder of Jewish assets including the ones of artistic value must be connected with Nazi intent regarding extermination of Jews. The first intent was to arianize Jewish immovable assets, and the second was the economical profit from the nation condemned to extermination. This plan was conducted in three periods: 1) restrictions 2) ghettoization 3) liquidation of ghettos and sending to the death camps. From the very beginning, of fall of 1939 until the end of 1941, the confiscation of museums', archives' and libraries' collections were executed including most of the valuables of synagogues and communities as well as private assets. Jewish assets were transported into warehouses on the territory of General Government in Warsaw (National Museum), Lublin (city castle), Krakow (Jagiellonian Library, later moved to Wawel, the Royal castle), subsequently; they were further transported to Germany.

On 6th of September of 1939, a decree was issued, which prohibited the sale of any movable and immovable assets belonging to Jews. It was a retroactive regulation having effect from the date of September 1st, 1939.⁹⁷ During Yom Kippur in Krakow (22 and 23 September, 1939) SS-*Oberscharführer* Paul Sieber, the chief of the Gestapo *Referat IV B4* of the Reich Main Security Office (RSHA) for the district of Krakow, ordered the surrender of all ritual valuables from Krakow synagogues. According to Alexander Bieberstein, they were deposited in *Ost Institute*. The old, handmade Jewish candelabras were taken to Wawel, the Royal

⁹⁷ A. Eisenbach, *Hitlerowska Polityka Zagłady Żydów*, Warszawa 1961, p. 192.

castle that became the General Gubernator's residence. Additionally, the Jewish Krakow *Kehila* was ordered to deliver any requested furnishings and decorations to German officials arriving to Krakow as the capital of General Government.⁹⁸

On 5th and 6th of December, Germans blocked the streets in Kazimierz, Jewish district in Krakow, in order to confiscate anything that was valuable. Bieberstein reports in his diary that Jews were robbed of "ritual objects, Torah scrolls, candleholders, goblets of high artistic and collecting value."⁹⁹ Additionally "ritual objects made of gold and silver that belonged to *Beit Tefilas* of Krakow." *The Black Book of Polish Jewry* informs about the *Aktion*: "On the following morning at 8 o'clock, all houses were searched. The soldiers spent several hours in each, breaking up the floors, digging in the cellars, tearing up rugs and carpets and destroying the bedding. Officially the searches were for foreign exchange (currency), jewelry and large sums of Polish currency which Jews were forbidden to have in their possession".¹⁰⁰ Similar robbery was conducted in Podgórze in February of 1940. Furthermore pictures and fine carpets were taken from Jews.¹⁰¹

The General Gubernator's decree, dated on 24 of January 1940, which was announced on 15th of February, by *Stadthauptmann* Karl Schmid, ordered all Jews and Jewish institutions to report their assets until March 1st, 1940.¹⁰² Jews were forced to declare assets located in Poland and abroad,

⁹⁸ A. Bieberstein, *Zagłada Żydów w Krakowie*, Kraków 1985, p. 19, 23.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem.*, p. 23.

¹⁰⁰ *The Black Book of Polish Jewry. An Account of the Martyrdom of Polish Jewry under the Nazi Occupation*, ed. J. Apenszlak, Boston 1999, p. 78.

¹⁰¹ A. Bieberstein, *op. cit.*, p. 226, 22.

¹⁰² *Ibidem.*, p. 27-28.

including furnishings, objects of everyday use, also clothing.¹⁰³ This decree constituted “securing” art works owned by Jews and in the fall of 1940 as is documented by Karol Estreicher, Jr. in *Cultural Losses in Poland during the German Occupation 1939-1944*, the art auctions that had taken place in Krakow. Nazi auctioned over a hundred pictures taken from Jewish collectors, including the likes of Fränkel and Holzer whom had possessed works of Polish painters such as Malczewski, Rodakowski, Gieryski.¹⁰⁴

It must be acknowledged that some of the Jewish cultural assets were deposited with Poles, who paid the highest price if caught. Bieberstein recalls Poles who were imprisoned in KL Płaszów once ritual silvers were found within their household.¹⁰⁵ Famous pharmacist, Tadeusz Pankiewicz stored 12 Torah scrolls of the Krakow Jewish community. In Krakow churches were deposited Torah scrolls.¹⁰⁶ Entire collection of the Sare family including: paintings, works on paper, porcelain and furniture, were saved in Krakow.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, there was an instance of a German citizen, Rehman – the chimney cleaner, for years living in Krakow Jewish district of Kazimierz, who saved an entire art collection of the Scharf family.¹⁰⁸ Renowned collection of Maurycy Gottlieb’s works that belonged to the Beres’ family was forcedly sold in 1939 to Jozef Stieglitz, an art dealer with galleries in Krakow and Lvov.¹⁰⁹ Some of these masterpieces were later in possession of Pieter Menten, a Nazi Dutch, who arrived in Krakow

¹⁰³ D. Agatstein-Dormontowa, *Żydzi w Krakowie w okresie okupacji niemieckiej*, [In:] *Kraków w latach okupacji 1939-1945; Studia i Materiały*, „Rocznik Krakowski”, t. XXXI, , Kraków 1949-1957, p. 194.

¹⁰⁴ K. Estreicher, Jr., *Straty kultury polskiej pod okupacją niemiecką 1939-1944 wraz z oryginalnymi dokumentami grabieży*, Kraków 2003, p. 104-105.

¹⁰⁵ A. Bieberstein, *op. cit.*, p. 29-30.

¹⁰⁶ T. Pankiewicz, *Apteka w getcie krakowskim*, Kraków 2012, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ The Archive of National Museum in Kraków, file of Elsa Krause’s assets.

¹⁰⁸ R. F. Scharf, *Co on mnie i Tobie Polsko; Esseje bez uprzedzeń*, Kraków 1996, p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ E. Mendelsohn, *Painting a People. Maurycy Gottlieb and Jewish Art*, Brandeis 2002, p. 187.

from Soviet occupied Lvov area on December 26, 1939. By June 18th, 1940, he became administrator for Jewish antique stores and art galleries in Krakow: Stieglitz (Rynek Gl. 21), Horowitz (Wislna), Katzner (Bracka), Frist (Florianska). SS-Hauptscharführer Menten committed enormous amount of thefts, some with Stieglitz's collaboration, who was denouncing Jewish valuables. Travelling between Krakow and Lvov, he was unloading his booty on Grottgera 12, Krakow: "Persian and other valuable carpets, crystals, porcelain, silver (candleholders, goblets) and pictures...they were valuable paintings mostly Poland's leading painters".¹¹⁰ For his enormous theft and counterfeiting documents he was arrested and put on trial in the summer of 1942. *Reichsführer* SS, Heinrich Himmler arrived to solve the affair that included some other high rank personnel including General Karl Eberhard Schöngarth and removed them from the Polish scene. Menten was sent to Holland with 3 trailers of collectibles and valuables transported by Schenken & Co.¹¹¹

The corruption between Germans was overwhelming. Thus, there was the given instance of a lawsuit against various SS personnel such as *Sturmbannführer SS und Polizei* Willy Hasse, who expropriated a picture created by Wojciech Kossak.¹¹² Germans specifically loved Kossak's art works. His chief of SS and police in *Krakau Distrikt*, *SS-Oberführer* Julian Scherner was also arrested for expropriation of Jewish property near the end of 1943. Also Brigitte Frank, the wife of the General Gubernator, regularly visited the ghetto to bargain-hunt for objects of art and furs. Similar visits to the ghetto were paid by the wife of Baron Otto von Wächter, the governor of the administrative district of Krakow. Additionally, this woman liked

¹¹⁰ IPN Kr 010/69161, the testimony of Ludwik Pulchny, 13 June, 1946.

¹¹¹ IPN Kr 010/69161.

¹¹² T. Pankiewicz, *op. cit.*, p.226.

to visit National Museum and select objects of museum value to decorate the palace of the governor of Krakow.¹¹³

With regard to this tragic period of history, a few Polish owned art galleries experienced a hedonistic time of prosperity. One that just opened in first years of WWII, SALON OBRAZÓW on Łobzowska 6 (Aleksander Hybieński) had a flow of pictures mostly from ghetto. The other one on Sławkowska 6, dealt with Pieter Menten (Jakub Bulanda).¹¹⁴ Also, shortly after the WWII, Jozef Sandel, an art historian who was attempting to save the remains of Jewish heritage in Poland for the Jewish Historical Institute from renowned Krakow art dealer Stanislaw Pochwalski, purchased a great amount of pictures of Jewish artists.¹¹⁵

The liquidation of the Krakow ghetto profited the Germans substantially. The horrific act effectively removed any guardians of remaining Jewish valuables and allowed the Germans to take with impunity. Feliks Kopera, director of National Museum recalled as “besides paintings Krakow Jews had tons of carpets and silvers that they inherited from generations. By the liquidation of ghetto, SS-men brought out potato sacks full of silver in the view of passerbyers”.¹¹⁶ As to conclude with the tragic view of the destruction of Jewish cultural assets these events will be recounted.

- 1) Dora Agatstein Dormontowa recalls in her report “*Jews in Krakow during the German Occupation*” testimony of the survivor who witnessed that an organized group of prisoners worked at seeking

¹¹³ GK. 164/47 t. 1, p. 116.

¹¹⁴ IPN Kr 010/69161, the testimony of Ludwik Pulchny, 13 June, 1946.

¹¹⁵ M. Tarnowska, *Judaika Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego – historia powstania, specyfika*, [In:] *Własność a dobra kultury*, ed. G. Czubek, P. Kosiewski, Warszawa 2006, p. 100.

¹¹⁶ F. Kopera, K. Buczkowski, *Straty i zniszczenia dzieł sztuki i zabytków Krakowa* [In:] *Kraków w latach okupacji 1939-1945*, „Rocznik Krakowski” t. XXXI, , Kraków, p. 150.

hidden art works, paintings. Findings were carried to Józefińska 16 where a German appraiser evaluated the paintings. Some items were chosen for preservation and distributed between Germans; useless items were sold for little money to Poles gathered around a ghetto fence. And the occasion of Jewish subjects or painted by Jewish artists were burned. According to the testimony there were several thousand pictures.¹¹⁷

- 2) The tragic casus of Jewish ritual objects. Even though, Germans had already plundered most of them, the Krakow Jewish Community were permitted to catalog the rest of the items. Even in *Gazeta Żydowska* of December 10, 1940 there is a statement that Germans will allow for organization of Jewish Museum. How much truth it was, no one knew. So under a supervision of engineer Ludwik Guttman a group of people inventoried the remains.¹¹⁸ It was obvious that Germans plundered most of the gold and silver ritual objects. On 21 of March, about 150 Torah Scrolls, candleholders, table covers, embroidery from Remu Synagogue and many more elements were transferred to Limanowskiego 2, to ghetto. Some of the left behind synagogal valuables were transferred later with help of bribing and stored in the *Judenrat* building. During the winter of 1942/1943, it was decided to hide the objects into the already prepared place within the dome of the funeral house in Płaszów. The judaica did not survive because in June of 1944 Amon Goeth detonated the building for an additional railroad into the camp. The part, where the objects were hidden survived but the commander ordered to stave in windows and door. At this moment he discovered

¹¹⁷ D. Agatstein-Dormontowa, *op. cit.* p. 221.

¹¹⁸ *Gazeta Żydowska*, Nr 41 (Dec. 10, 1940), Nr 3 (Jan. 3, 1941), Nr 4 (Jan. 14, 1941).

them. Most of the synagogal items were burned and some were taken to *Institute für Ostdeutsche Forschung*.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ J. Stendig, *Dewastacja cmentarzy, bóżnic, i zabytków żydowskich Krakowa podczas okupacji hitlerowskiej* [In:] *W 3-cią rocznicę zagłady ghetta w Krakowie*, Kraków, 1946, p. 183-189.

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35. National Museum of Krakow *Verordnungsblatt des Generalgouverneurs für die befetzten polnischen Gebiete*

Part II

Medical Experiments Performed at the Dachau Concentration Camp

World War II turned out to be a dark and tragic period in the history, through the battles at the front line, the decimation of people in the occupied territories, forced massive migration to the tragedies which took place in concentration camps. All these crimes had the purpose of serving a higher cause, all dictated by the Führer – Adolf Hitler. Under his order, ethnic cleansing, murdering the mentally ill (Act T – 4¹²⁰) and children with underdeveloped mental capabilities, along with medical experiments on human beings were carried out. The unceasing strife for a pure race created a hell on earth.

The ideal places to perform “research” on various diseases were the concentration camps. Massive amounts of people, who were not sent immediately to the gas chambers, were forced to work under inhumane conditions, without sufficient amounts of nurture, water and appropriate living conditions. For the camp doctors of the SS, they were the perfect “research material” – exhausted, ill-fed people without a right to speak. In the light of “a higher cause”, many were subject to numerous medical procedures. They became “guinea pigs” for the often insufficiently trained physicians. Many last-year medical students without any practical experience worked in the camps. They acquired experience by performing procedures on prisoners who in many cases were not in need of medical intervention.

¹²⁰ Act T – 4 (codename coming from the address from which the procedure was coordinated: Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin) was dated for the years 1939 – 1944 and had the goal to physically eliminate people with underdeveloped mental capabilities and the physically handicapped. The academic justification came from the book *The Destruction of People not Worth to Live*, published in 1922 by lawyer Karl Binding and psychiatrist Alfred Hoche.

In the memoirs of camp survivors, one can read that within several days, a prisoner e.g. underwent a removal of the gallbladder, then stomach surgery and finally a hernia operation. This occurred without any medical cause and diagnose. The explanation given to some of the “tested” prisoners was that the cause of their illness was poor diet.¹²¹ Others were told that their irresponsible way of living in the period prior to the War was what made the intervention necessary.

The doctors in the Dachau concentration camp performed several types of experiments which were mainly commissioned by the Luftwaffe, along with trials to discover vaccines against severe illnesses. The latter activity was supposed to facilitate the future migration of people to the eastern parts of the occupied territory where there was a threat of a malaria epidemic.¹²²

Experiments commissioned by the Luftwaffe

The ongoing war, and especially the eastern front with its harsh winters, were not in favor of the German soldiers, who were often ill-prepared for staying in such difficult weather conditions. The commanders of the Luftwaffe could not allow themselves to lose vast amounts of subordinates, and therefore they ordered research to see how the human body reacts in specific, unfavorable conditions. The author selected three of the most developed procedures.

¹²¹ St. Sterkowicz, *Zbrodnicze eksperymenty medyczne w obozach koncentracyjnych Trzeciej Rzeszy*, Warszawa 1981, p. 212 – 213.

¹²² <http://www.majdanek.com.pl/eksperymenty/dachau.html> (access 5.12.2013).

Experiments to test the effects of drinking sea water

The experiment of testing the suitability of salt water for drinking was led by an internist, Professor Wilhelm Beiglböck. The experiment was important in light of navy soldiers dying of thirst and shot-down pilots waiting for help.

The research began in 1942 in the Research Institute of Flight Medicine, where salt water was filtered with the help of silver nitrate. However, the project, led by Dr. Konrad Schäfer, was both very costly and time consuming. Because of this, the People's Technical Institute became interested in the idea of engineer Eduard Berk ("Berkait"). It consisted in enhancing the taste of salt water by adding sugar and vitamins.

On the 20 May, 1944, at a conference in Berlin, a decision was made that the "Berkait" project would involve forty-four prisoners of Gypsy origin, for the period of ten days. Two main questions were raised: Which solution is more advantageous to the human body, dehydration or drinking salt water?, and does the tested product have a proper effect on the filtration of sea water by the human kidneys?

With this in mind, the appointed groups of prisoners were divided into five subgroups:

- a) Prisoners who did not receive anything to drink;
- b) Prisoners who received as much sea water to drink as they wished;
- c) Prisoners who received half a liter of sea water with the "Berkait" additive;
- d) Prisoners who received a liter of sea water with the "Berkait" additive;
- e) Prisoners who received a liter of regular salted water.

Group “d” was the control group, however, in the course of the experiment the salted water was replaced by sea water.¹²³ It must be noted that the experiments were, of course, performed without consent of the tested prisoners and they were aggressively forced to cooperate. In order to retrieve results which were as accurate as possible, the prisoners received identical nurture to the German pilots. Through the entire testing period, the prisoners were subject to various urine and blood checks. The effects were frequent hallucinations and vomiting. Moreover, the prisoners developed neurological disorders and had swollen livers.

At a Berlin conference in October 1944, Wilhelm Beiglböck presented the results of his research. They indicated clearly that the method was ineffective. He stated, however, that consuming small amounts of sea water does not result in diarrhea and that drinking salted water alternately with normal water gives good results.¹²⁴ The air force eventually did not use the additive on its soldiers.

Experiments focused on testing the endurance of the human body in low temperatures

Experiments of this sort were carried out under the supervision of Professor Georg Wertz, who performed them on animals at the Airforce Institute in Munich. However, following a request from Karl Wolff, Marshal Erhard Milch was offered to perform these tests on prisoners in Dachau. Involved in the procedure were Luftwaffe Dr. Siegmund Rascher, Professor Holzlöhner, Professor Singer, Professor Adolf Jarisch and Dr. Erich Finke. The experiment, aimed on helping pilots shot down over sea and suffering from hypothermia while waiting for help, commenced on August 15, 1942.

¹²³ <http://www.majdanek.com.pl/eksperymenty/dachau.html> (access 5.12.2013).

¹²⁴ St. Sterkowicz, *op.cit.*, p. 139 – 141.

Prisoners were clothed in pilot's attire on top of which life jackets were attached, and held in containers with water for long periods of time, with water temperatures oscillating between 2.5°C (which was, in fact, less than in the mountain creeks surrounding Dachau) to 12°C. The prisoners were held in the water until their body temperature was 26.4°C, which was measured in the prisoner's stomach or anus.¹²⁵ If the body temperature fell one more degree, blood, urine and brain fluids were tested. Heart-rhythm disorders and changes in blood composition (a rise in the number of hemoglobin and consistency of the blood, as well as a higher level of leukocytes) were noted. After removing the prisoners from the water, Dr. Rascher ordered them to have sex with female prisoners. This kind of warming of the body should be used at war, when there would be no other way.¹²⁶

Furthermore, the prisoners were divided in two groups; the first was made to stay in the water with the back of their heads under water, while the second could leave their necks and heads above the surface. Casualties were recorded especially in the first group.

After the first series of experiments (in the year 1942) it was concluded that a gradual warming up of the body was less effective than a sudden warm-up. In the end report, it was stated that life jackets should have foam collars to protect the back of the head from excessive cooling. Witnesses counted 15 to 18 prisoners who have died due to the experiment.¹²⁷ The experiments continued in later periods and sources indicate that around 360 people were tested, out of whom 74 lost their lives.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 121.

¹²⁶ http://www.www_wara_pl.republika.pl/rysunki.html (access 6.12.2013).

¹²⁷ St.Sterkowicz, *op. cit.*, p.122.

¹²⁸ http://www.www_wara_pl.republika.pl/rysunki.html (access 6.12.2013).

Experiments focused on testing the endurance of the human body on high altitudes

A very important experiment for the Luftwaffe was linked to the endurance of the human body on high altitudes, and in effect, the changes in air pressure. The need for an answer to this question arose from the development of the Messerschmitt Me-63 aircraft powered with a rocket engine. Flying such a machine induced a risk for the pilot's life as there was a possibility of getting shot down from high altitudes of about 20 km above the ground. The first experiments were performed, as in the previous cases, in the Institute of Flight Medicine in Munich and in the Flight Experiment Institute in Berlin, with the help of test animals. Due to the lack of volunteers, Dr. Siegmunt Rascher, in 1941, agreed to transfer the experiments to the Dachau concentration camps after consulting Heinrich Himmler. Together with Dr. Rascher, the experiments were carried out by Professor Georg Wetz, Professor Siegmunt Ruff, Dr. Hans Romberg, and a German prisoner Walter Neff.¹²⁹

A pressure chamber was transferred from Berlin and installed in the Dachau camp. The chamber could hold 10 to 12 people. Inside, there was an additional room for 2 people, from which air could be pumped out, and then pumped in again as to simulate a fall from an airplane at 20,000 meters. Both rooms were connected by internal windows and a telephone connection. Four different situations were tested – gradual and sudden falls from a high altitude, with and without oxygen. Also, the effects of meta-amphetamines were tested (Pervitin).¹³⁰

The first test group consisted of 15 well-fed men. They were in good

¹²⁹ St. Sterkowicz, *op.cit.*, p. 107.

¹³⁰ <http://www.majdanek.com.pl/eksperymenty/dachau.html> (access 6.12.2013).

condition. The second group consisted of prisoners, enfeebled by the harsh camp life. It was tested whether embolisms formed in the brain were always lethal. Often, the unconscious subjects of the experiments were drowned in order to dissect their bodies.

Considering the high death-rate in the experiments, Professor Romberg complained to Professor Rufow in Berlin. As a result, the pressure chamber was removed from the camp in Dachau. This resulted in Professor Rascher's reluctance to share his results and continuation the involvement of the Luftwaffe in these experiments.

The report presented to Heinrich Himmler extensively described the details of the experiment; however, it was different to the report which was sent to the Luftwaffe authorities. It stated that "there is a possibility of survival of a fall of 15 km without an air support system; with an air support system, a fall from 18 km is survivable. When falling from an altitude of 21 km, an automatic parachute opening system is necessary, and an air support system is essential for survival at this altitude."¹³¹ The conclusion of the experiment was that pilots were advised to stay calm to a certain altitude at which the parachute would deploy automatically, even at the risk of losing consciousness.

Experiments conducted with population resettlement in mind

After occupying the territories of the Ukraine and Belarus, Germany started to prepare for massive population resettlement. However, these regions were potentially threatened by malaria epidemic and tuberculosis. The doctors were ordered to find vaccines for these two serious illnesses.

¹³¹ *Ibidem.*

Tuberculosis

Experiments conducted in relation to this disease were carried out under the supervision of Dr. Rudolf Brachtel and Dr. Hans von Weyhem. The prisoners underwent not only pharmaceutical tests, but also homeopathic and herbal tests. The tests were undertaken in 4 sub-groups A – D. In the first subgroup, medication was used which was commonly used for tuberculosis, the second subgroup performed gymnastics and underwent hydrotherapy, while the third subgroup used homeopathic and herbal extracts. The fourth subgroup became the control group for test comparison and therefore the test subjects were not given any treatment at all. Experiments were conducted for a period of one year, after which the experiment was closed. The test subjects who were still alive at that point were treated in the psychiatric institute in Hartheim. From a medical point of view, testing 114 prisoners did not lead to any significant results.¹³²

Malaria

The research conducted for the development of anti-bodies against malaria was under the supervision of Dr. Claus Schelling, a tropical disease specialist, together with Dr. Rudolph Bracht and Kurt Plöttner. The research for a cure lasted for from the beginning of 1942 until April 1945 in the Dachau concentration camp. The test subjects were mainly Polish priests, who were considered the least important prisoners. In total, over 1,500 prisoners were used.

Two groups were selected during the tests. One group included bearers of the disease; in the second group, it was tested if the prisoners would become resistant after multiple infections. The tests were conducted by exposing the prisoners' chests to mosquitoes imported from the Robert

¹³² St.Sterkowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 63 – 80.

Koch Medical Institute of Tropical Hygiene. The main symptoms were shivers and a high fever. The absence of satisfying results from using this method was followed by injecting prisoners with fluids extracted from the infected mosquitos' salivary glands. Over 60 types of bacteria were injected. In order to find a cure, antipyrine, quinine, piramodan and an unknown medicine referred to as "82516" were used. In the course of the experiments, 40 prisoners died. Due to complications, another 400 lost their lives later on.

The tested prisoners tried to avoid being infected by the mosquitoes during the experiments by rubbing themselves with salad spices from the camp's canteen, which scared the mosquitoes away or even killed them.¹³³

This experiment, from the medical point of view, also ended in a fiasco. Despite this fact, even in the testing phase, Dr. Schelling asked for rehabilitation and the possibility of further research, being convinced of its imminent, effective completion.¹³⁴ Conducting many medical experiments, which aimed at saving human lives, regrettably brought opposite effects. Hundreds of people died of exhaustion, in terrible agony, which the reports summarized coldly that the results were not satisfying as the target results were impossible to reach. It is also inconceivable that the persons conducting these dreadful experiments earlier had sworn the oath of Hippocrates to fight for human health and lives.

"Nazism turned their own physicians into criminals and murderers. However, it is misleading to think that Hitler's cruelty, terror and medical crimes were only conducted on prisoners in the concentration camps. Many of them were a result of the realization of laws and mandatory decrees in the Third Reich, which breached human rights".¹³⁵

¹³³ *Ibidem.*

¹³⁴ St. Sterkowicz, *op. cit.*, 73 -80.

¹³⁵ http://www.www_wara_pl.republika.pl/rysunki.html (accessed 6.12.2013).

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Translation: Nataliya Dubina

The absence of the pink triangle at the International Monument in Dachau as an expression of the politics of memory addressed at homosexuals as victims of the Nazi terror in Eastern and Western Germany

When a visitor arrives to the Dachau Memorial Site, which is located on the site of the former concentration camp Dachau, they first walk through the gatehouse - *Jourhaus* where the Nazis placed the infamous inscription "Arbeit Macht Frei". That is where the so-called "Path of the Prisoners" begins and visitors can follow the steps of the imprisoned newcomers. The moment one crosses the gate they enter an enormous roll-call square (able to hold between forty and fifty thousand people). On the right hand side of this square lays the Maintenance Building (ger. *Wirtschaftsgebäude*), in front of which there is a characteristic iron construction which is part of the International Memorial.

The history leading to the emergence of the International Memorial was rather long. After the liberation of the KZ Dachau by American forces, by the decision of the Bavarian government in 1948, the area of the former concentration camp was decided to serve as housing for refugees. The government of Federal Republic of Germany during this time did not display any willingness to establish a Memorial Site on the site of the former camp. This however changed, mostly due to international influences including the Comité International de Dachau, which represented primarily former political prisoners, and in 1965 the Dachau Memorial Site was established. In order to commemorate the prisoners of the concentration camp, the authorities of the Memorial Site decided to organize a contest, which would help to choose a design for a potential monument serving as a memorial.

From the submitted projects, the chosen design was by a Yugoslavian artist - Nandor Glid. Glid had created many monuments which commemorated victims of crimes committed by Nazis during the World War II, among which was a monument dedicated to killed Yugoslavians in the former Mauthausen concentration camp, installed in 1958. In Dachau, the memorial designed by Glid consists of several parts, of which the key one is the already mentioned iron monument which expresses "the inhuman treatment of human beings, the nameless, faceless mass death of people penned up in enclosures like worthless animals".¹³⁶ Next to this rather disturbing construction, there is another element, through which the artist wanted to address the strength of the victims: a ramp-like relief which symbolizes "international solidarity of the prisoners within the camp".¹³⁷ On the relief there are iron triangles, filled with various colors and connected with three symbolic chains. The key elements here are these triangles, which stand for different groups of inmates in the concentration camp. Opened in 1933, Dachau was the first camp, and as such, served as a model for subsequent camps. Its system of inmate classification according to a specific chart which distinguished groups identified by the Nazis by different colored triangles, came into usage in other concentration camps. From 1937, the different colored triangles were distributed upon arrival at the camp to all of the prisoners, who were obligated to wear them in the form of patch on their chest. Therefore, on the relief there are several colors of triangles to be seen: red, which stood for political opponents, blue for foreign forced laborers or emigrants, purple for Jehovah's Witnesses or yellow double triangles indicating Jews. Such patches of different colors became for some a symbol of solidarity among the inmates.

¹³⁶ H. Marcuse, *Dachau: The Political Aesthetics of Holocaust Memorials*, [In:] *Lessons and Legacies III: Memory, Memorialization and Denial*, ed. P. Hayes, Evanston 1999, p. 156.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*.

When a visitor takes a closer look at the relief designed by Glid, there are several triangles drawing their attention – empty ones, with no color at all. These triangles are there to remember the groups of prisoners that did not earn recognition as victims of National Socialists and were left out from the official remembrance symbols. According to the classification chart there are three colors missing – green, pink and black.¹³⁸ These colors designated other groups, namely: professional criminals, homosexuals and asocials.¹³⁹ All of them were primarily included in the project, however, after the pressure exercised by the Comité International de Dachau, Glid was made to exclude them. As a consequence, the artist decided to leave empty rims of triangles, which, when being aware of the missing colors, have a particular significance not only in regards to the active period of Dachau as a concentration camp, but also symbolizes the “prejudices and limits of solidarity of the more politically oriented survivors”.¹⁴⁰

Nonetheless, there is no information explaining why these rims are empty and why some colors are missing. Furthermore, several experiences of the guided tours at the Memorial Site suggested that the exclusion of three groups of victims from commemoration expressed by the International Memorial is quite often omitted while the tour. Within the Memorial Site in Dachau there is no information explaining the absence of green, pink and black triangles on the relief. Interestingly, on the homepage of the Memorial Site in Dachau (ger. *KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau - Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätten*) there is information provided (in the section: history of the Memorial Site) explaining that between 1975 and 1985, the "forgotten

¹³⁸ There is also a brown color missing – designating Sinthi and Roma people, this patch was however not used in Dachau.

¹³⁹ Black triangle was usually given to people who either were incapable of working (therefore they were often called work-shy) as disabled or ill people, but also to lesbians, prostitutes, drug-addicts, homeless people and others.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibidem.*

victims" came into particular interest (Sinti and Roma, Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals).¹⁴¹ It seems however, that such interests have been quickly lost and have not initiated any actions aiming to include these groups as victims of Nazis within the International Memorial of Dachau Memorial Site.

Unfortunately, the politics of memory towards homosexual victims of Nazism have rather failed in recognizing them as innocent victims of the Nazi regime next to Jews, Slavs, political opponents and other groups oppressed during the World War II. The most striking example of their discrimination could be that they have received no legal recognition as victims and what is more, after the liberation of the concentration camps, homosexuals continued to be classified as criminals. This latter resulted from the legal situation after the World War II which was no different in the case of homosexuals from that during the Hitler authority. Such legal reality had an important influence on the approach towards homosexuals as even after the end of the war they continued to be discriminated both in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany. Therefore it is essential to introduce the legal reality of both German states.

The legal discrimination of the homosexuals was expressed in an infamous paragraph 175, which was introduced to the Penal Code of German Empire in 1871. In this version it stated that "unnatural fornication" between men is forbidden. During the Nazi regime paragraph 175 was expanded as it introduced a new term of "lewdness" which broadened the scope from sexual intercourse (which would fall under the term "unnatural fornication") to all same-sex practices including kissing or fondling. Interestingly, the law mentioned only men and left the same-sex

¹⁴¹ Website of the Memorial Site in Dachau, www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/present.html (access 7.01.2014).

practices of females out of the legal scope of this paragraph which stayed this way until the complete abolishment of this law.

After the war, prejudice against homosexuals was still deeply ingrained in the society and an image depicting homosexuals as “folk-corruptive” (ger. *Volks-schädlinge*), as they did not take part in the reproduction of the society, was rather current. Such stereotypes against homosexuals found its expression in the opinion of the courts, as for example “the Supreme Court of Berlin found that Paragraph 175a did not have ‘typical Nazi content’”¹⁴² and that such provision realized “progressive ideas in that it defended sexual integrity and thus the healthy development of the youth”.¹⁴³ The oppression of the homosexuals after the World War II reached its peak in 1959 as in this year the number of the reported cases of homosexuality increased to 8 737, which was similar to the number from 1938.¹⁴⁴

In regards to the legal situation, East Germany’s version of paragraph 175 remained in effect until 1968 and in West Germany’s until a year later. These changes did not however end the legal discrimination of homosexuals as also in the 80s and 90s “the political organizations of homosexual men and women were illegal and publication of gay and lesbian journals was not authorized”.¹⁴⁵ Another illustration of a discriminatory attitude towards homosexual victims of Nazi terror could be a shameful Stasi memo issued in response to an attempt by homosexual men and women in 1984 to commemorate pink triangle victims at the memorial sites of Ravensbrück

¹⁴² G. Grau, *Return of The Past: The Policy of the SED and the Laws Against Homosexuality in Eastern Germany Between 1946 and 1968*, “Journal of Homosexuality”, Vol. 37(4), 1999, p. 7.

¹⁴³ Kammergericht Berlin, 1950, p. 129.

¹⁴⁴ A. Knoll, *Totgeschlagen-totgeschwiegen: die homosexuelle Häftlinge im KZ Dachau*, Munic e.V., 2000, p. 101.

¹⁴⁵ G. Grau, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

and Sachsenhausen. The memo stated: “The leadership of the Committee [Committee of Antifascist Resistance-Fighters in the GDR] is charged with arranging matters so that there are no special problems with homosexuals in the concentration camps. Many homosexuals were criminals and the number of those (homosexuals) murdered is very low in relation to the overall number of those murdered”.¹⁴⁶

What is also important in the matter of the official approach of both states towards homosexuals and their recognition as a group of the Nazi regime’s victims is that there was never a major debate in the postwar reality of these two states. A very similar approach of ignoring these victims was adopted by the authorities of Dachau Memorial Site. Following the abolishment of paragraph 175 at the end of the 1960s, a movement in the 1980s addressed the failure to recognize homosexuals as victims at Dachau and demanded official recognition as victims of the Nazi regime. The attempts of homosexual groups to get an official acknowledgment of the pink triangle inmates faced many obstacles along the way. In the 1970s and 1980s, many homosexual groups wanted to participate in various commemoration events, but they often faced massive opposition from the rest of the participants or they were prohibited to join.¹⁴⁷

What is more, homosexuals who were persecuted by Nazis were denied any reparations. In 1979, a SPD Member of the Parliament - Hajo Hoffman, issued an inquiry to the government of FRG regarding this issue. The government responded stating that the right to repatriations applied only to those who were persecuted for politically opposing national socialism

¹⁴⁶ Archive of the former Ministry of State Security of the GDR, ZA, ZMA XX 10050/1, p. 60.

¹⁴⁷ K. Müller, *Gedenken und Verachtung. Zum gesellschaftlichen Umgang mit der nationalsozialistischen Homosexuellenverfolgung*, [In:] *Homophobie und Devianz. Weibliche und männliche Homosexualität im Nationalsozialismus*, ed. I. Eschebach, Berlin 2012, p. 128.

or on the grounds of their race, faith or ideology. Furthermore, it expressly stated that this right does not apply to people who were abducted to concentration camps because they were homosexuals. These people could have tried to rely on the General Law Concerning the Results of War (Allgemeine Kriegsfolangesetz) however only until 1959, afterwards they had no legal possibility to be granted repatriations.¹⁴⁸ Only in 2002, the Lower House in Berlin - Bundestag, passed a formal pardon, which cleared the names of homosexuals convicted under the Nazis.¹⁴⁹

In the last two decade however, a promising dialogue has been established between homosexual groups and associations of former prisoners or local authorities. This tendency is also seen in the field of research conducted within the museum and documentation centers on National Socialism and its victims, which begun to explore the fate of so-called “forgotten victims”. It was a shift in the general approach towards the politics of memory – after decades of focusing on the collective fate, oral histories and narratives became important testimonies which brought individual stories into the spotlight. Among other stories, there were those of men captured for being homosexuals, such as Rudolf Brazda, Pierre Seel and Heinz Dörmer.

This shift in the politics of memory was also expressed in the appearance of memorial stones at memorial sites of former concentration camps, dedicated in the memory of homosexual victims of Nazism. So far, there are six such stones in: Mauthausen (1984), Neuengamme (1985), Sachsenhausen (1992), Buchenwald (2002) and Risiera San Sabba, Trieste (2005). The sixth one lies in Dachau, where it was put in 1985, however, after the objection of the Comité International de Dachau two years later

¹⁴⁸ T. Bastian, *Homosexuelle im Dritten Reich: Geschichte einer Verfolgung*, Munich 2000, p. 94.

¹⁴⁹ A. Cortese, *Opposing Hate Speech*, Westport 2006, p. 134.

it was provisionally placed within the Protestant Church of Reconciliation. Since 1995 it is located in the Memorial Room of the Memorial Site in Dachau. Besides these memorial stones, there are also several memorials located outside of the former concentration camps which came into existence as well – the first one was installed in Amsterdam in 1987, followed by Nolledorfplatz in Berlin (1989), in Bologna (1990), The Hague (1993), Frankfurt (1994), Cologne (1995), Anchorage/Alaska (1999), San Francisco (1999), Rome (2000), Sydney (2001), in Holocaust Centre in Laxton/UK (2005), Montevideo/Uruguay (2005), Vienna (2007), Berlin (2008), Barcelona (2011),¹⁵⁰ Nuremberg (2013) and Tel Aviv (2014).¹⁵¹ Many of these memorial stones or memorials contain a pink triangle as a symbol of homosexual victims of Nazism.

The absence of the pink triangle within the International Memorial of Dachau Memorial Site expresses very adequately the policy towards homosexual victims of Nazism in Germany. These people were not only denied recognition in the post-war time, but faced continued discrimination based on paragraph 175, which remained in the very same version as the one introduced by the National Socialists in 1935. The act of excluding the pink triangle from Glid's relief symbolizes the exclusion of the homosexual victims (together with other groups such as the Roma and Sinti) from the official politics of memories influenced and led by authorities (both state and local), The International Dachau Committee, other associations of former prisoners and historical institutions. Homosexuals were denied any influence and for a long time even access to official commemorating initiatives as they were prohibited from participation. However, in recent years there has been

¹⁵⁰ K. Müller, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹⁵¹ die Standard, Israel: *Erstes Denkmal für homosexuelle Nazi-Opfer eingeweiht*, www.diestandard.at/1388650636899/Israel-Erstes-Denkmal-fuer-homosexuelle-Nazi-Opfer-eingeweiht (access 10.01.2014).

a shift in these relations and the groups dealing with the stories and situation of homosexual victims have gained more influence and recognition in the public sphere. It is a step forward, to bring the 100,000 men arrested as homosexuals in 1933-1945, of whom only half were officially sentenced, back into the scope of politics of memory together with an estimated 5,000 to 15,000 who were incarcerated in concentration camps. This would also be a gesture of solidarity and, as it was already mentioned, that was the primary intention of the International Memorial – to display “international solidarity of the prisoners within the camp”.

This year, a Memorial Site in Dachau led mainly by the Comité International de Dachau responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the former concentration camp will have a great opportunity to address the lack of the pink triangle (together with black and green) on the International Monument as there is an anticipated exhibition on the project by Nandor Glid.

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Translation: Katarzyna Orzechowska

Dachau as a prototype of strategic development in constructing of concentration camps

Concentration camps were an integral part of the national socialist regime. The authorities of the Third Reich created them across the country in order to resolve the problem of opponents of the totalitarian system, accused of adversarial activity against the State.¹⁵² Already in the mid 1930s, by the power of the authorities at various levels, the concentration camps were created which were to contain enemy political prisoners of the Third Reich- communists, socialists, liberals and other left wing people. In March of 1933 the Dachau concentration camp was built, which was to serve as a model and an example for future camps which were to follow suit.¹⁵³ Three days before the official grand opening in Dachau, Himmler, by the virtue of his powers as a police commissary of Munich, gave a press release:

on Wednesday the first concentration camp will be opened in the vicinity of Dachau. The camp can hold up to 5,000 people. It will hold communist activists and, if necessary, the leaders of the Marxist organization Reichsbanner, threatening the security of the State; when the state apparatus will be overloaded and forego the prisons of specific communist activists (...). We will take these steps, regardless of petty scruples, with a conviction that in this manner we work towards the calming of the nation in accordance with its feelings.¹⁵⁴

The concentration camp in Dachau was also used to promote propaganda. Propaganda pictures from Dachau portrayed prisoners lined up in an almost military formation. The objective was to demonstrate the existing discipline and order. It meant to influence public opinion that the concentration camps were actually places of resocialization. The Nazis tried

¹⁵² <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263> (access 25.11.2013).

¹⁵³ R. Gerwarth, *Kat Hitlera – Biografia Reinharda Heydricha*, Kraków 2013, p. 118-122.

¹⁵⁴ B. Behning, *Z badań nad strukturą grup w obozie koncentracyjnym Dachau 1933-1938*, Opole 1988, p. 19.

to convince society that the existence of concentration camps was in fact necessary for the good of all citizens. The prisoners leaving the camp became wholesome members of society. No information regarding tortures or murders committed in the camps was ever released to the public.¹⁵⁵ All of these efforts were meant to illustrate complete control over the situation. Since initially various SA and SS militias would run around the streets beating up the opposition, considerable efforts were now made to illustrate change. There were no more street brawls, but rather a well-organized and orderly penitentiary system. Of course at the onset of the camps there were hardly any rules, but the public was under a different impression.¹⁵⁶

Up until May of 1933 the camp remained under the management of Landerspolizei (Lapo), or the National Police. Not many people are aware that Dachau at the beginning was not SS control. The first shipment of 60 prisoners arrived at the camp on March 25th. Following the orders of the Bavarian Minister of Interior Gauleiter Wagner, from March 25th until April 22nd, the camp was to receive a shipment of political prisoners who were arrested on the 9th of March. The circumstances of the prisoners under Lapo supervision were diametrically different from those following the SS take-over of Dachau. There were no complaints ever reported about improper treatment of prisoners by the Lapo. Nobody complained about beatings or verbal abuse. This situation did not last long however, because in May the Dachau concentration camp was transferred over to the SS, and the foreshadowing of the upcoming changes was the speech delivered to the SS by the soon-to-be in charge, von Mahlsena-Ponikau:

I hand over to you the prisoners, criminals who during the battle beat our very best. These are pigs and you should treat them as such. If there is anyone

¹⁵⁵ K. Hoffmann-Curtis, *Memorials for the Dachau Concentration Camp*, "Oxford Art Journal", 1998, vol.21(2), p. 25.

¹⁵⁶ R. Gerwarth, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

amongst you who cannot look at blood, please step forward to the left. Let also those come forward who believe these people are just like us!¹⁵⁷

At the beginning of its existence, Dachau did not function based upon any set guidelines and the punishments applied within the camps were not sanctioned by law. This was a source of conflict within case law. There were criminal proceedings initiated against several members of the crew. Some of these proceedings were dismissed by Himmler and Röhm. As already mentioned, the lack of regulated guidelines continued to pose a problem. The situation changed when Theodore Eicke took over as the camp's commander.¹⁵⁸ "On September 1, 1933 he introduced a guideline for disciplinary punishment. The guidelines included flogging as well as the death penalty. The death penalty was often applied to those who were accused of conspiracy, inciting rebellion, and spreading of information about the actual conditions within the camp".¹⁵⁹ "After the events following the Night of the Long Knives, the SS became independent from the SA which allowed Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler to centralize the administration of all the concentration camps. Himmler entrusted this task to" Theodor Eicke, the commander of Dachau from June 1933. Eicke was also nominated by Himmler as the Concentration Camps Inspectorate (Inspekteur der Konzentrationslager). The role of the inspector included having the responsibility for each prisoner from the moment of his arrival to the camp up until the moment of his death or release.¹⁶⁰

Eicke fulfilled his function as an inspector up until 1939, when he was replaced by Richard Glueck, who kept his position until the end of the war. From 1934 the Concentration Camps Inspectorate remained subject

¹⁵⁷ B. Behning, *op. cit.*, p. 21-22.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 25-27.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 30.

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263> (access 05.11.2013), B. Behning, *op. cit.*, Opole 1988, s. 36.

to the Head Office of the SS until 1939, when the Head Office took over the role. In 1942 it already belonged to WVHA, or the SS Main Economic and Administrative Department. The last change came about as a result of the growing needs of the German war economy. Himmler decided to utilize the work of the prisoners to intensify production to accommodate the growing needs of the war.¹⁶¹

The prisoners were often subject to various elaborate forms of torture, which often resulted in death. In the reports that described a prisoner's death, it was also often declared an accident, suicide, death as a result of an illness or shooting during an attempted escape. It was required to report every fatal incident to the Security Policy (SiPo). Murder was often reported as death because of severe health problems such as a „weak heart” or „cardiac arrest”.¹⁶² In nearly two years after the assumption of power by the Nazis, the SS became the sole administrator of the entire concentration camps system. However from 1938, from the *de facto* merger of the Gestapo and Kripo, therefore in reality from 1936, SiPo had the exclusive right to give orders and make arrests, dismissals, conduct executions, and the right to use other forms of punishment.¹⁶³

In 1933 Eicke, already as a commander of Dachau, created organizational and administrative procedures outlining the functioning of a concentration camp, as well a security measures for its potential defense. He also published a regulation on guard duties and prisoners of the camp. He was allowed to implement all these changes because of his position as a Concentration Camps Inspectorate.¹⁶⁴ Throughout his tenure, there was

¹⁶¹ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007387> (access 05.11.2013).

¹⁶² <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263> (access 15.11.2013).

¹⁶³ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007387> (access 05.11.2013).

¹⁶⁴ J. R. Harris, C. R. Miller, *Dachau Album: Perspectives from War Crimes Prosecutor William O. Miller and Court Reporter Leona Mumeddy Miller, 1946-47*, “The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society”1997, vol. 95(2), p. 140.

an additional considerable change implemented. The Dachau concentration camp began to play an important economic role for the needs of the SS. On one hand, the camp in Dachau was an efficient tool in the ideological battle against the regime's political opponents, while on the other it was an abundant source of cheap labor necessary to respond to the growing needs of war-time economy. This meaningfully contributed to further development of other concentration camps throughout Germany. It also played a big role in SS becoming economically independent.¹⁶⁵

The camp's personnel were comprised of a crew and a security division. The crew consisted of: commander and his personal staff, office of Security Police, an assistant in charge of prisoner records, arresting commander with his own crew (office allocating work, roll call officer, and *Blockführer*), administrative staff responsible for fiscal matters and procurement, camp doctor hired by the SS accompanied by two health (sanitary) officers and a paramedic.¹⁶⁶ The structure which checked out in mid-1930s in the Dachau camp was also applied throughout the entire system of concentration camps. The system of procedures and penalties in Dachau was acquired elsewhere.¹⁶⁷ Moreover the school personnel in the „school of violence” in Dachau later worked in other newly established camps. In addition, newly recruited SS officers came to Dachau for their probation period, or those who aspired to a higher position within their own respective camp. The camp also contained those individuals who were experiencing difficulties in other camps. It was here that an assessment was made whether an individual was necessarily predisposed for this line of

¹⁶⁵ B. Behning, *op. cit.*, p. 34-36.

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263> (access 15.11.2013).

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

work, and more importantly was able to remain in service within the camp system.¹⁶⁸

At the beginning, the officers who served in Dachau stemmed largely from lower and middle class and were young; on average about 25 years old. The initial SS crew in Dachau was not very impressive. The leadership was not characterized by excessive professionalism; privates from the security branch also did not exude skill. According to witness testimony, some did not even know how to use firearms. They also lacked necessary organization.¹⁶⁹

For people perceived as political or racial enemies of the Reich, Gestapo applied what was called protective custody (*Shutzhaft*). Issuing of a protective custody warrant meant sending to the camp a broad range of social groups. It was used to imprison Jews, communists, freemasons, liberals, social-democrats as well as clergy, who were opposed to the Nazi authority, as well as members of oppositional movements and many other real or alleged enemies of the State. Such an order was not subject to the supervision of the court and therefore was actually completely unrestricted. Up until the end of July, the number of ‘victims’ of this order in Bavaria alone, included 4,152 people, with 2,200 of them ending up in Dachau. Around half a year later in January of the following year, 16,409 people were arrested as a result of protective custody warrants. The individuals who were arrested on the grounds of the protective custody warrant and found themselves in the camp were especially brutally treated.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ D. Riedel, A ‘Political Soldier’ and ‘Practitioner of Violence’: The Dachau Concentration Camp Commandant Hans Loritz, “Journal of Contemporary History” 2010, vol. 45(3), p. 564-565.

¹⁶⁹ Ch. Dillon, ‘We’ll Meet Again in Dachau’: The Early Dachau SS and the Narrative of Civil War, “Journal of Contemporary History” 2010, vol. 45(3), p. 550-551, B. Behning, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁰ R. Gerwarth, *op. cit.*, p. 119-120.

In turn, the Criminal Police (Kripo) took care of those accused of criminal or anti-social behavior, but not political. These individuals were arrested under the so called preventive custody (Vorbeugungshaft). Issuing of an order for such a detention was mostly caused not so much by actual criminal behavior, but rather as a result of racial and social prejudice. It was usually used against the Roma, secondary criminal offenders, or homosexuals. The duration of imprisonment on the basis of such an order could last indefinitely. After the war broke out, Himmler forbade any release from concentration camps during the war's duration.¹⁷¹

The conquests of the Third Reich between 1938-1939 caused an increase in the number of deemed political enemies, or asocial individuals, which then created a need for additional concentration camps. From the outbreak of World War II within the Greater German Reich six concentration camps were already in existence. Dachau was the first camp created in 1933, followed by: Sachsenhausen (1936), Buchenwald (1937), Flossenbürg (1938), Mauthausen (1938) and also following the dissolution of the camp in Lichtenbürg, a new woman's camp was established in Ravensbrück (1939).¹⁷²

The fundamental function of the concentration camp system can be distinguished into four main stages. The first stage was the centralization of the concentration camp system accomplished by Theodora Eicke in 1934. During the second stage stabilization occurred of all the permanent camps from 1936-1937. War preparations contributed to the further proliferation of the concentration camp system, with this stage lasting until the outbreak

¹⁷¹ <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007387> (access 15.11.2013).

¹⁷² <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005263> (access 15.11.2013).

of the war in 1939. The final stage occurred after 1942 and was characterized by genocide as well as forced labor.¹⁷³

Dachau was the prototype for his successors and was the longest lasting concentration camp, as well as the most important amongst the initially created camps. It was there that the SS crew, later distributed about other camps, received its training for the next 12 years.¹⁷⁴ Consequently Dachau was not only a place for detention. It was also a place for training, within which young SS adepts were prepared for their service in the concentration camp system. The SS received there the necessary experience and practice, as well as theoretical knowledge.¹⁷⁵ The meaning of Dachau as well as its influence upon other camps rose considerably during the 1930s. It mostly resulted from the increasing number of prisoners to which new social groups were added.¹⁷⁶

Amongst the first rank members of the crew were three future commanders in the then inexistent camps. It was Richard Baer, future commander of Auschwitz, Max Koegel, who in the future would take over the position of a commander in Ravensbrück, in Majdanek as well as in the camp in Flossenbürg, as well as Martin Weiss, later commander of Neuengamme, Majdanek and Dachau. Among the then Dachau crew, there were also future Lagerführers: Friedrich Rupert (Dachau), Wolfgang Seuss (Natzweiler), Anthon Thumann (Gross-Rosen and Neuengamme) as well as working in Auschwitz: Johann Schwarzhuber, Franz Hössler and Vincenz Schöttl.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ D. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 557.

¹⁷⁴ Ch. Dillon, *op. cit.*, p. 536.

¹⁷⁵ J. Kosiński, *Niemieckie obozy koncentracyjne i ich filie*, Stephanskirchen 1994, p. 205.

¹⁷⁶ J. R. Harris, C. R. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁷⁷ Ch. Dillon, *op. cit.*, p. 536-537.

In April 1936 in Dachau there were 1,712 prisoners. Only two years later this figure would almost double, it happened after the annexation of Austria as well as the German march on Sudetenland. In addition, 10 thousand Jews were temporarily detained in Dachau following the events of the Crystal Night. Along with the increase of prisoners, the conditions in the camp also drastically worsened. The prisoners were tortured as well as forced to murderous physical labor in the expansion of the camp. The violence was increasing even more after the commander of the camp Hans Loritz to exacerbate punishment and torture, especially towards Jews.¹⁷⁸

Generally the conditions within the camp were influenced by several elements. Therefore in different camps the conditions varied. Above all, the commander of the camp had considerable influence over the conditions in the camp, as well as his administration and security crew. Normally the political prisoners were treated better than criminal prisoners. In later years, after the outbreak of the war, the conditions were also affected by the situation at the frontlines. The most say was granted to the commander who was directly below the Concentration Camps Inspectorate. It was he who decided the faith of prisoners and influenced the behavior of the crew. In essence, he was really responsible for all that went on in the camp: shipments, punishment, nutrition, medical care as well as the death penalty. Furthermore, according to the author of the book *German concentration camps and their branches* Berlin was supposed to give bonuses to the commanders who have exhibited extraordinary brutality, and there was a high mortality rate within their camps.¹⁷⁹

The camp's expansion was a direct result to the increased deaths due to exhaustion. This phenomenon came about between 1937 and 1938;

¹⁷⁸ D. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 563-564.

¹⁷⁹ J. Kosiński, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

prisoners were particularly exploited as labor force. It was also a time during which the so called isolation regiment (Isolationskompanie) was created. Those prisoners who were assigned to these regiments were especially exhausted as a result of extreme harsh labor, which often involved working the gravel mines. Under the Loritz leadership, a breakthrough in the way prisoners were treated came about. The concept of education slowly disappeared, leaving more room for common exploitation and absolute subordination.¹⁸⁰

Dachau during this time was not a sole example of deteriorated treatment of prisoners. After 1938 the conditions under which prisoners were being treated also changed in camps such as Buchenwald or Sachsenhausen. Amongst the crew and the commanders of the camps there was a mutual conviction that violence was the best solution, and only through such means could the prisoners be controlled and resocialized. Majority of them were convinced that they are the defendants of their nation and they are fighting against more than just political opponents considered enemies of the State. They firmly believed that they are taking part in a bigger, more important struggle on fostering the racial unity of their nation. These were also the expectations of the crew members, and the guards were expected to be tough. Sometimes even certain forms of manipulation were used against the SS to torture prisoners. For example, they were told that the prisoners were dangerous to the society or were accused of sabotage. The SS was encouraged to torture these people, which was then rationalized as undeserving of sympathy.¹⁸¹

The expectations were anyway very clearly and precisely stated. Eicke included his expectations of the crew in one of his decrees: „Every

¹⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 58.

¹⁸¹ Ch. Dillon, *op. cit.*, p. 562-564.

sign of sympathy is a weakness against the enemies of the State; which in turn would be immediately used for their own purposes. Every sympathetic gesture for the enemies of the State is not worthy of the SS.”¹⁸² The brutality was a highly sought after trait amongst the candidates for the concentration camp crew. However it was not the only one. One day it was decided that one SS officer was to be fired for inadequate intelligence. He was however, later brought back because of lack of candidates to fill his position. Commanders really considered the prisoners as a real threat to the nation. The SS more often began to view themselves as political soldiers who are above the law. This led to the prisoner having virtually no rights.¹⁸³

What is interesting however is that at the beginning of Dachau’s operations, the head of the Security Service (SD) Reinhard Heydrich, who on a large scale decided who should come to the camps, actually curtailed a bit the excessive brutality in the camps. In September 1934 he appealed to his subordinates, lecturing them that although strictness is necessary, excessive brutality however, is not encouraged and it is not worthy of an SS officer. Of course Heydrich was not in any way guided by the well-being of his prisoners. He also wanted to ensure the integrity of an SS officer and the police, as well as creating an appearance of rule and discipline. Citizens were expected to respect these organizations. For those who had an unclear conscience, that should have been their warning, however those who did not work against the regime should indeed possess a sense of security.¹⁸⁴

Terror was a thought-out tactic of the Nazis, utilized not only within the concentration camps but beyond. It was one of the many tools of the national socialists. Violence was a part of their ideology, and this ideology justified any crime committed. Brutality and lack of scruples were desired,

¹⁸² B. Behning, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹⁸³ D. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 564-567.

¹⁸⁴ R. Gerwarth, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

and sympathy was considered a weakness. This approach was not only used against the prisoners; because this type of behavior was favorably looked upon by the authorities, it was also used by the offices to get promoted and acquire more power.¹⁸⁵ It could not have been allowed however, that in the neighboring countries Jews, communists, liberals, Roma and sexual minorities were allowed to live freely and criticize the politics of the Third Reich. The Nazis wanted to cleanse Europe, even the world of those „hostile elements”. What was known as *Drang nach Osten* began and soon after these hostile elements of the Third Reich from European countries began to flood not only the camps within Germany, but newly created camps in other Nazi-occupied countries.

The war brought changes within the concentration camps. The invasions on behalf of the Third Reich brought forth many Poles and Russians to the camps, as well as Jews from occupied countries. After 1942 the WVHA began to fill the camps with foreign workers, who worked for the economic needs of the Third Reich. They were appointed to work within German agriculture, as well as within the factories or mines.¹⁸⁶ The outbreak of the war also provided further direction to the politics within the concentration camps which consequently underwent drastic radicalization. The number of prisoners increased, and with this increase so did the number of executions. The general mortality rate also increased amongst the prisoners, and those who were unfit for work were systematically killed. The situation worsened even more after the German attack on USSR. The camps received an influx of Russian political commissioners, intellectuals, war prisoners as well as Jews from the region.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ D. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 573-574.

¹⁸⁶ J. R. Harris, C. R. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 140-141.

¹⁸⁷ D. Riedel, *op. cit.*, p. 571-572.

It is impossible to compare the conditions of the firstly constructed camps built prior to the war with those which were created after 1942, where the daily reality consisted of forced labor, annihilation or doom. In the end however, the later radicalization reached even the pre-war camps such as Dachau. It was the commanders such as Eicke or Loritz who trained those who were to become the future commanders during the war, passing on to them their radical convictions. It is their actions that constituted a subsequent component and implementation of the Nazi policy of extermination.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 574.

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Translation: Monika Eriksen

Agata Podosek

The Clergy Against Camp's Terror in Dachau

Here in Dachau every third victim was a Pole.

One of every two Polish priests was martyred.

Their holy memory is venerated by their fellow prisoners of the Polish clergy

The description published on the board which is hanged on camp's 'Lęku Chrystusa' chapel in Dachau

In 1933 set up occurred of the Concentration Camp in Dachau, as the first place of crime in Germany – it became a model for other concentration camps in the world. It is located on the outskirts of Dachau, nearby about 15 kilometer in the north – west from Munich. This place experienced very unfavorable climate. It was characterized by swampy and marshy terrain. This area had unhealthy, mountainous and humid air. It was scarcely selected without purpose. It was mainly designed for political prisoners who were opponents of Hitler's regime and for prisoners who came from countries which were occupied. In the Concentration Camp was also a group of 43 professors from Jagiellonian University. The camp was composed of sub-camps and places of hard labor. These places were diffused across the Germany. The number of camps was about 130 and in 1944 there was created a camp for women. In the hell of Dachau, a lot of Polish priests were killed. From 1938 the camp was the main place of training for the members of crews from other concentration camps which were located on the ground of Germany and other countries. The main purposes for setting up the camp were to get rid of important political elite. These groups posed a threat to the rule of Nazis. They wanted to achieve this aim by:

tortures, murderous work, medical experiments, starvation and poor climate and weather conditions.

The Dachau Concentration Camp was the main camp for the clergy elite. The camp assembled clergy of the Christian churches, including: Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. In the camp there were 2,794 monks, bishops, deacons and priests as estimated by the Catholic Church. From Poland there were 1,773 clerics, which was the great majority there. A lot of them were killed - approximately 868. Pope John Paul II pronounced a very big number of the clergy, tortured in the camp - blessed. "I join in prayer with priests, former prisoners of the concentration camp at Dachau. No word can express fully the suffering, humiliation, physical pain and mental anguish, which have become your participation. At the time of oppression and abasement, in the place of a raging evil, you have remained steadfast and faithful. In the abyss of cruelty and hatred, where it was decided to destroy biologically human and trample his dignity, you were keeping bravely and heroically as heralds of a new civilization based on truth, goodness, respect for life and justice."¹⁸⁹ – pope John Paul II said on the 50th anniversary of camp's liberation.

The Germany wanted to destroy the Polish intelligentsia and religious life in the occupied Poland. They knew that they could do it easy by destruction of the foundation of faith in the Polish homeland. "Desiring to replace defeated Poland as quickly as possible in the German province, Hitler decided to destroy the whole secular and spiritual Polish intelligentsia, expecting that the common people would become easily his humble servant then."¹⁹⁰ The churches were closed, the Polish priests were arrested. The first major transports of Polish clergy came to Dachau in April and May of 1940.

¹⁸⁹ <http://www.panstwo.net/1706-kaplani-w-pasiakach> (access 03.12.2013).

¹⁹⁰ Ks. bp dr F. Korszyński, *Jasne promienie w Dachau*, Poznań – Warszawa 1985, p. 35.

In December of 1940 there were in the camp about 2772 catholic priests from many countries. This group of prisoners experienced very strong repressions. Father Stanislaw Werenik was the first priest imprisoned at Dachau.

The clergy mainly took up block numbers 28 and 30. A part of Polish priests were also in block numbers 16 and 18 where lived mainly Poles. But the number of clergy in these blocks was limited to avoid the influence they had on secular prisoners which could threaten the Nazi. The presence of the priests was very important for the Poles. Thanks to it they felt more confident and calm. They could benefit from sacrament of penance and other support that was given by the pastors. Work in the camp initially was considered as means of teaching according to the slogan which was placed on the entrance gate – which was: “*Arbeit macht frei*”. This slogan connects the Concentration Camp at Dachau and Concentration Camp of Auschwitz – Birkenau in Oświęcim. Later work became one of the brutal ways of killing and destruction of the victims. Clerics were working mainly on the so-called plantations. Working on the plantation was one of the heavier workloads in the camp, this work killed by the thin air of the mountainous conditions, the hot sun in the summer or the snow and frost in winter. It was also the responsibility of the Polish priests to carry, three times a day, the meals in very heavy boilers to the tables. Those of them unable to shoulder the load were beaten and kicked. “In our camp – mentioned bishop Franciszek Korszyński (number 22546) - there were no draft animals, so they had to replace with people. People were harnessed to the plough for removing snow from the camp, to cars, to harrows for cultivating of field, even to embankment to pressing the road. Even today, I live in the memory of camp image showing the construction of the road. A few or a dozen of the prisoners with outstretched necks, with curved headband is pulling back

a huge heavy shaft, the other prisoners are pushing this shaft and the kapo is gibing at them. Among the slaves of the twentieth century I can see almost the same Polish priests. In light of our religious work is a noble, valuable, exalted but when it is more than human strength or when it is making in unsuitable conditions - is a great suffering. So it was in Dachau with our physical work.”¹⁹¹

The camp was also famous for the brutal medical experiments conducted on prisoners by their captors. There were, among other things: malarial experiments, surgical experiments, experiments typhus, on the liver, tuberculosis and many others. These experiments affected about 5,000 prisoners, of which approximately 2,000 of them died as a result. These experiments were also inflicted upon the clergy. Despite the fact that everyone in the camp was treated as just a number, without any value, without a name, without the right to a good and decent treatment, Polish priests kept the man's dignity, which was very difficult to achieve in this hell. There people committed things that they normally would never have committed (including cannibalism). They knew about it that they must help others who were suffering there. They knew that they must give a testimony. They knew how important a role they had to fulfill. Clerics knew about this, they must serve others suffering, knew they had to bear witness, they knew how important a role they were to play, despite his own misery in this confusing and nightmarish reality in which they must live. They were patriots and were missing their homeland. They often spoke in their speeches in the way: we – Poles. They identified with the beloved Poland. They mentioned about their missing homeland. Despite staying in a foreign land they felt a strong connection with their homeland. When none of the clergy signed *Deutsche Volksliste*, they were laden with brutal repression (mainly

¹⁹¹ <http://www.swietyjosef.kalisz.pl/Dachau/98.html> (access 29.11.2013).

in the form of long, excruciating exercises and marches in the main square). Many of them did not survive this reprisal.

The clergy couldn't openly celebrate the Mass, couldn't pray, recite the breviary and give or carry anything of cult. The spiritual help for sick and dying was also prohibited. But the priests organized a hidden religious life. In the Concentration Camp there came into being a seminary modeled on seminary studies which were in prison of Ładzko. This idea met with the great favor of the students. "Jesus deprived us celebrating of Mass and He was waking her hot desire in our souls at the same time to show us that we have to live in that this should be the posture of the priest! Jesus made it impossible to normal holding of the priestly office, we have learned to appreciate its value and with pleasure serve others. How sublime and salutary though terribly painful learning!"¹⁹² – writing F. Korszyński.

The camp was also famous for the cruel punishments. There were e.g. whippings. Despite this all punishment speeches of the prisoners was sounded mainly in this way: "Spiritually, we feel good. We treated all the anguish as the act of God and the suffering we wanted to here was the glory of God and the benefit for of the Church, the country and for ourselves."¹⁹³ We can think a lot: from where so much faith, strength and perseverance. They had their own faith - the only and irrefutable which they were placing their hopes on Jesus Christ. It is hard not to recall testimonies of persons who have the first – hand experience. These testimonies are the best reflection of the event which had a place in Dachau. They ought to move people and show hurt or not - the feelings of former camp prisoners. Father Kajetan Stanisław Ambrożkiewicz: „A man was performed execution in the

¹⁹² Ks. Bp dr F. Korszyński, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

¹⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 47.

bath. When it was our turn, we undo our shirts and everyone stood under the designated hook. "I went on a high stool, which put under my feet this man. I placed my hands on the back of the outer side of each other. When the man tied up my hands by chain in the wrist, pulled my hands up and I held it at the back with all my might to have a little spare then... Bath hooked up a chain to hook placed in the ceiling and I jumped slightly from the stool ahead. This person who was reluctant then snatched him stool from under his feet. The SS who was present sometimes twisted of prisoners who hanging on the chain, until it stops and he suddenly let go of him. It was a huge pain and the person who was hanging often howled and felled into a swoon. I was 27 years age then, weight less than 60 kg and I had a lot of pride of young Pole then who didn't want to show the enemy that it hurts... And then the SS told me to celebrate Mass. My words in Latin flowed peacefully. Only occasionally sweat was spattering on the floor from our tortured and hanged bodies"¹⁹⁴ – Father mentioned of making one of the punishments.

Where in all this was a God? Why the prisoners must suffer and die? Was it for crimes which they committed? And now - is it justice for it? Yes, some of them were criminals, but the rest of the prisoners? Almost everything was a criminal offense for the SS. A lot of prisoners were dying without a trial and judgments. It was hard to see the good in the camp. Everyone could see the enormity of the evil there, but in retrospect it was a plus in all this misfortune that prisoners haven't suffered alone but in a group. They could aid one another, to raise one another's spirit in heart, give help and this sort of help mostly offered by the priests and others in this place. "I think the greatest value of our common stay in Dachau was our collective sacrifice, in different ways offered on the altar of God, the Church

¹⁹⁴ <http://www.swietyjosef.kalisz.pl/Dachau/98.html> (access 29.11.2013).

and the Homeland for long months and years."¹⁹⁵ – ks. Bp F. Korszyński had written.

"The people looked for God in the camp but they could not find Him there. Everything that was around them, seemed to be his denial. They desired to find Him. So they were looking for Him in religious books, it was hard to find understanding from scholars words which would allow them to discover the way to Him but if not this way then at least the most miserable narrow path. They thought deeply on the meaning of the suffering, they tried to understand the essence of good and evil, they were searching for solutions of the disturbing riddles, how can you reconcile your own heart with the words of the prayer: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. - I do not know if they found."¹⁹⁶ – wrote one of the prisoners of Dachau, to his beloved, in one of his letters. The prisoners insistently were searching for an explanation to make a sense of their suffering. They were looking for answers to the question: why? They were looking for God to be able to understand this enormity of evil and pain. A lot of them doubted in Him, they didn't recognize Him as the Father, they lost faith in Him. Most of the prisoners really couldn't say prayer, they couldn't say the words of all prayer because often their voice faltered on the particular words. However, there is hope that, as they had sometimes the faith in liberation so after the liberation they believed that they would be able to say a word of the whole prayer with peace in their heart, too. God is love, so, why man has to suffer? Why people who are unjust and ungodly have often better in this world? "However, since the inconceivably long lasting eternity compared to the temporal life is as a huge ocean to a drop of water, so the believer accepts even the largest of suffering not only from resignation

¹⁹⁵Ks. Bp dr F. Korszyński, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁹⁶G. Morcinek, *Listy spod morwy*, Warszawa 1957, p. 23.

and submission to the will of God, but also with joy and gratitude to God, seeing that they come with love. Such an idea of adopting suffering from supernatural motives even of joy is a real fact, as witnessed by numerous prisoners in Dachau."¹⁹⁷ As theologians say: a man has to suffer because born in the state of original sin, even though the baptism takes away the sin does not remove its effects. It is the punishment for that sin remains, and that the death penalty is, for example, various diseases, anxiety, suffering, pain. Prisoners explained themselves suffering the fact that in the camp they pay for eternal happiness, the highest and most importantly, as the Scriptures say. Camp in Dachau was in some way sanctified through the pain and the anguish that had happened there. But how can it be a sanctified place of execution, place of crimes? A place where there was so much evil and hatred? A place full of fear and pain? The death camp at Dachau was a pile of sacrifice, it was such a small Golgotha, where the prisoners were nailed to the Cross via various suffering with the suffering Christ. "When we were suffering in the camp, especially in the hardest moments, it was coming to us the idea to pay the God for the insults, the injured him. All these crimes, we have witnessed and which so vividly felt for myself, they were a mockery of everything that is divine, were sneers law of God, God himself - was a long one, stretching all the years caused a chain of insults God. And insult requires compensation, was a long one, stretching all the years a chain of insults God. And insult requires compensation."¹⁹⁸ – said priest. Bp F. Korszyński.

When the prisoners felt that destruction is near they have sundered under protection the St. Joseph. The clergy gathered in the chapel of the German priests every day in the evening and there they were praying to the

¹⁹⁷ O. A.Z. Urbański, *Duchowni w Dachau wspomnienia z przeżyć około dwóch tysięcy księży w hitlerowskim obozie koncentracyjnym*, Kraków 1945, p. 120.

¹⁹⁸ Ks. Bp dr F. Korszyński, *op.cit.*, p. 217 – 218.

patron - begging for a miracle of deliverance. On April 22, they solemnly gave up to St. Joseph from Kalisz. A few days later there was a deliverance from the hands of torturers. Today is Chapel of Remembrance in the church St Joseph in Kalisz, dedicated to the victims of the Dachau Concentration Camp. The camp was liberated on 29 April 1945 by U.S. troops that crossed the gates of the camp that day about 17:00, about an hour before the time at which the tormentors planned mass execution of all prisoners. The order to murder all the convicts was issued personally by the *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler. Americans were horrified by what they found there. Hundreds of dead, emaciated people. "Branches of our stagnant their views, moans so terrible that up beyond belief, cruelties so enormous as to be incomprehensible to the normal mind. Dachau and death are synonymous."¹⁹⁹ - noted in the statement of the liberation of Auschwitz American officer William Quinn, witness the liberation of Dachau Concentration Camp.

People who raise weapons against each other
in an open war do not cease to be because of this moral beings,
responsible to one another and to God.²⁰⁰

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¹⁹⁹ <http://blogmedia24.pl/node/63397> (access 28.11.2013).

²⁰⁰ J. M. Greene, *Sprawiedliwość w Dachau*, Warszawa 2012, p. 7.

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The Portrayal of Poles in the Dachau concentration camp

In my work I decided to concentration on Poles, who survived the concentration camp in Dachau. I do not attempt to conceal that I was most impressed by the meeting with a first-hand witness - Abba Naor. At the age of thirteen, he was relocated to the ghetto along with his entire family. His mother and brother were subsequently killed. Abba Naor was then taken to the concentration camp in Dachau. There he managed to survive by supplying the SS officers with food, which he was able to also keep for himself, which of course was forbidden (any guideline infringement was punishable by death). Although the American forces liberated the camp, Abba Naor always emphasized, his soul was never truly liberated.²⁰¹ To a certain degree, I wanted to refer to this person and in addition, focus on the biographies of the Poles arrested in Dachau. Due to the lack of sources documenting the faith of Poles in the Dachau concentration camp, I focused upon several biographies (accessed in the National Museum of the Dachau Concentration Camp) which will serve as my research material.

From March until December 1940 at least 13,375 Polish citizens were taken to the Dachau concentration camp. A large portion of the members of the leading social stratum were murdered by operational groups, and the remainder was deported to the concentration camps. A majority of the population was supposed to be relocated to Polish areas occupied by the Germans (General Government). In the Dachau concentration camp the largest prisoner group was in fact Poles. In few words, I also wanted

²⁰¹ www.das-andere-leben.de, *Abba Naor* (access 11.12.2013).

to describe the outline of few individuals as means of developing an analytical overview of the treatment of Poles in the camps.²⁰²

Bronisław Najnigier (born in 1920) already as a high school student joined the underground movement. After his arrest in April 1940 he was placed in the concentration camp. He was forced to work in 'building of roads' and within the 'plantation' division. He also wrote poetry which was secretly distributed within the camp. In April 1945 he was freed and liberated from the camp in Dachau. The following person whom I would like to introduce is Jerzy Skrzypek (born in 1920). He was arrested in 1940 in Warsaw, along with his mother, and consequently deported to the concentration camp in Auschwitz; because he refused to sign that he is of German origin. In 1943 he was deported from Auschwitz, via a concentration camp in Flossenbürg to the camp in Dachau. There he was a victim of medical experiments (experiments related to hypothermia) conducted by doctor Rascher. In September 1943 he was also forced to work for a company called 'Messerschmitt'. On the 29th of April he was liberated. A third individual is Stanisław Kozerski (born in 1911). He was arrested under the suspicion of conducting activities opposing the German authority and on May 5th 1940 he was deported to Dachau, where he was interrogated by the Political Division Unit. Because he did not reveal the names of his comrades he was ordered to a series of 25 beatings and 30 days detention in the bunker. In July 1943 he was transported to a concentration camp in Natzweiler and after its termination back to the camp in Dachau, where he remained until the end of the war. Paweł Bakowski (born in 1892) is another individual who I would like to mention. He came to the camp in Dachau on April 19, 1940. In September 1942 he was transferred to a concentration camp in Buchenwald, and in October of the same years to yet another camp

²⁰² Posters in the Concentration Camp Museum in Dachau (access 6.11.2013).

in Sachsenhausen. From there he was transported to a camp in Mauthausen, and following its liquidation on April 18, 1945 he disappeared without a trace.²⁰³ Tadeusz Biernacki was involved in Polish Scouts in Poland, when as a 17 year old in 1940 was arrested and deported to various camps in Germany. In 1943 the Gestapo placed him in a concentration camp in Dachau. He was forced to work in a division called Messerschmitt. At the end of the war, he had considerable luck during the raids, as he was to escape the march of death and was able to work in the camp for people who were relocated in Kempten, before he returned to his homeland.²⁰⁴

Among the Poles who suffered in the Dachau concentration camp was Zygmunt Rażniewski (born in 1922). As a high school student he was arrested on May 1940 in Łódź as part of the murderous rampage against Polish intelligentsia.²⁰⁵ It was the so called extermination of the Polish elite. Beginning with 1939 to Dachau there were many shipments of prisoners from various occupied countries by the Third Reich. Gradually the camp became a place for the extermination of the Polish elite, containing the intelligentsia and clergy.²⁰⁶ In May 1940 he was transported along with almost 1,500 other people (mostly high school students) to the concentration camp in Dachau.²⁰⁷ More than 40 thousand Poles were taken to Dachau between 1939 and 1945. An estimated 1,900 people died in this camp. Zygmunt Rażniewski survived. His often repeated words: „Why I am here and how did I deserve to be here”, are a testimony that Rażniewski did not know the reason why he ended up in the camp. „I do not know even today,

²⁰³ Posters from the Concentration Camp Museum in Dachau (access 6.11.2013).

²⁰⁴ *Jugendliche im KZ, Junge Polen*; www.gedenkstaettenpaedagogik-bayern.de (access 12.12.2012).

²⁰⁵ Posters from the Concentration Camp Museum in Dachau (access 6.11.2013).

²⁰⁶ wiadomosci.wp.pl, *80 lat temu powstał KL Dachau pierwszy niemiecki obóz koncentracyjny/PAP* (access 12.12.2013).

²⁰⁷ Posters from the Concentration Camp Museum in Dachau (access 6.11.2013).

why I was arrested. In my documents it is written that it was a result of a preventative measures. However I was never interrogated, never. Nobody ever asked me what I have done”. „Besides I had a lot of luck” was his commentary about the five years he spent as a prisoner in the concentration camp. At the end of September he came to Łódź, where he continues to live today.²⁰⁸

Raźniewski attended a high school in Łódź, when the Germans attacked Poland in September 1939. In December the high school was closed. In the framework of a policy for germanization efforts the elite members of society were harshly treated. It was decided that the elite could remain in Poland but must be placed in a concentration camp. On the 21 of April, Raźniewski was arrested. After several days he was deported to Germany along with around 1,700 other Poles. According to his testimony they were mostly young people - he was only 18 years old. When they reached Dachau Raźniewski heard a statement that „would remain in his memory forever”. It was a statement uttered by an SS officer who stated „Here there is only one way - either health or crematorium”. From the beginning he worked in different units, including the blood chilling unit called „plantation”. On a surface of around 80 hectares there were around 800 to 1,200 prisoners working in 1942. Regardless of the weather, whether it was sunny or raining, the prisoners had to remain at these plantations in their thin clothes. It was very cold and there was no way to dry oneself. „We were forced to wear soaked clothing until late hours of the night”.²⁰⁹ In this way Raźniewski wrote about the working conditions in the camp. In the middle of 1942 he was transferred to a different working division called „Präzifix”. It was one of the biggest divisions in the camp. This unit

²⁰⁸ *Jugendliche im KZ, Junge Polen*; www.gedenkstaettenpaedagogik-bayern.de (access 12.12.2012).

²⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

produced airplane engine parts, screws and it was also a supplier of fighter planes. The workshop was created in the vicinity of the camp. Up until his liberation, Rażniewski was forced to work there. Today he believes that his work actually saved his life. Although they were forced to work twelve hours a day, they did not work outside. „I survived the camp, because I was young and I adjusted to the harsh conditions in the camp”, says Rażniewski.²¹⁰

Poles were considered a majority in Dachau (around 40,400 prisoners). In 1940 there was around 13,000 Poles transported to the camp (it included Rażniewski). Surprising there was also a percentage of clergy in Dachau who originated from Poland. Actually 65% of clergy came from Poland.²¹¹ A priest by the name Leon Stępniak was also a prisoner in Dachau who came to the camp from Poznan on May 24, 1940. "Everyone was told to line up in set of five, after which the SS officers armed with rifles hurdled us - like criminals - down an asphalt road which ran along the SS quarters to the near-by camp" – this is how Leon Stępniak remembers his first moments after arriving in Dachau. A Polish priest recalls that exhausted prisoners were taken to the square in the middle of the camp where a roll-call was taking place. At dawn, when prisoners were suffering from the cold, these roll-calls were especially difficult to endure. Another camp prisoner - Aleksander Miedziejewski recalls his state in a following manner: “A human being then became completely frozen, unable to resist the urge to sleep, filled with apathy and often prayed for a quick end of his suffering on this earth. The air above them was filled with vapor of human breath of the several thousand of prisoners, along with unpleasant odor of ill bodies and a muffled sound of coughing coming from suffering lungs. And this is how

²¹⁰ *Ibidem.*

²¹¹ *Ibidem.*

people stood there in silence and gloom. (...)"²¹² The amount of Polish clergy illustrated that Polish people did not lose their faith in God, through their continued contact with them.

Around 13,600 Polish prisoners survived until Dachau was liberated. After his liberation in September 1945 Rażniewski returned to Poland, where he finished high school and then law school. He formed a family of his own and worked until 1988 in an industrial enterprise; today he is retired. He has since visited the Dachau concentration camp several times, in order to „ponder how the camp has since changed and how it looks today. Fortunately much has changed between the Polish and German nation, and we must nurture this unity. The young generation must know what the war period was like and how much suffering was inflicted upon all the nations. We, Europeans, should always live in peace and help and support others”²¹³ In modern time we can notice a difficult political situation not only in the Polish-German bilateral relations, but in all of the European Union. There are still a number of people who are biased, when it comes to the events from the past, although the German-Polish reality has changed for the better in the last several years.²¹⁴ There is still ongoing research conducted aimed at measuring how these mentioned changes came about. There are also many projects initiated which focus solely on the elimination of arising problems in the Polish-German dialogue.

An interesting aspect is the question of why you can only find some information about the above-mentioned individuals, when researching existing biographies of Poles who died in the concentration camp at Dachau.

²¹² wiadomosci.wp.pl, 80 lat temu powstał KL Dachau pierwszy niemiecki obóz koncentracyjny/PAP, *op. cit.*

²¹³ *Jugendliche im KZ, Junge Polen*; www.gedenkstaettenpaedagogik-bayern.de (access 13.12.2012).

²¹⁴ www.isp.org.pl, *Polska - Niemcy. Wzajemne postrzeganie Polaków i Niemców w obliczu wspólnej obecności taken from The European Union* (access 14.12.2013).

It is possible that these are the only data available on the Poles who died in the camp at Dachau. Guided by their example, we can imagine the way they were treated in the camp, as well as their daily lives. Most worked on the plantation. They managed to often perform activities that were prohibited - various forms of entertainment, such as writing poems. Some were victims of medical experiments. Often the prisoners were transferred from one camp to the other. For many Poles, Dachau was a place of transition during the period between 1939 and 1945. They were transported further to: Mauthausen, Buchenwald or Auschwitz.²¹⁵ From the individuals I have introduced above, most of their fate is known, except for one who disappeared without a trace. Nobody knew why they ended up in Dachau. Resulting from witness testimony mostly young Polish people were taken to the camp, because they were efficient in physical labor. Only those survived who adjusted to the existing conditions. Others had no chance. Upon observing the life of Rażniewski, some, he included, were able to realize their dreams after the camp, although they will never be freed from their haunting memories from 1933 until 1945. Some were able to create their own families, but also to become educated. An example of such achievement is also Abba Naor, who was able to have children of his own, grandchildren and even grand-grandchildren - which was his biggest dream. „I am happy that Hitler was unable to eliminate my entire family” – these words on one hand express satisfaction, while on the other, pain. Everything that took place in his life in the years between 1933 and 1945 led him to lose faith in God („God does not exist. If He existed, he would never allow the deaths of so many innocent people.”). In the cases of above mentioned survivors there are no aspects mentioned related to the faith in God. They

²¹⁵ *Jugendliche im KZ, Junge Polen, op. cit.*

simply tried to portray what life was like in the camps and their personal experiences, without interfering in religious matters.

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Part III

During the student (upper secondary level) conference, the young people presented their work that resulted from workshops and seminars they had attended. The students had an opportunity to develop research problems, whereas the children were asked to prepare statements on the theory of memory and widely understood social attitudes towards the Dachau Concentration Camp. This publication comprises texts written by students that gained positive reviews and can be characterized as scientific, research-based and analytical. The pupils' statements were classified as both empirical data and an element of project evaluation. This is mainly due to the fact that those statements were based on reproduction of factual knowledge that was conveyed to children via selected, non-scholarly texts on a given subject. However, we think that a part of schoolchildren's work devoted to their own reflections and views enables us to assess the way young people think about memorial sites and their significance in contemporary discourses of identity and heritage. For this reason, the project coordinators decided to publish excerpts from the pupils' statements only, and group them into three categories: (1) totalitarianism and concentration camps, (2) significance of memorial sites and (3) commemorative practices.

It is also noteworthy that during the conference, the children put forward several interesting hypotheses, although they were not able to substantiate them accurately. They, for instance, tried to define a new category of memory – i.e. a so-called active, generational memory, which largely depended on how certain age groups discover, analyse and understand history. this time of memory also comprises contemporary interpretations of memory and the memory of eyewitnesses – historical memory.

Teenagers focused their attention on eyewitnesses as well. They understand that soon enough, their testimonies will only be available

in archives, and that this cannot substitute for coming face to face with real people who share their stories. They, therefore, deliberated on possible remedies. They discerned that the responsibility to carry the narratives of the Holocaust will lie on their shoulders too – it will be up to them to make others aware of the past, of their meetings with Holocaust witnesses and all the reflections and emotions these meetings evoked. Recording the meetings is solely a way of documenting. The children underlined that it is mainly the young people's task to diffuse knowledge about the past, or, as they put it, to cultivate memory. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to arouse interest about the past among the young people by organizing meetings, lectures, discussions, study trips and seminars, as well as create websites that report past events, or educating through play – by developing computer games and board games (e.g.: the IPN), films, exhibitions, organizing lessons in museums, to reach as many young people as possible. The discourse of forgiveness and inheriting from others' experiences were yet another important subject that according to children should be included in a popular debate on the Holocaust.

Aksamovic Filip, Bubak Paulina, Dąbek Wojciech, Dziadur Łukasz, Dziuba Karolina, Dziubek Karolina, Gajewska Natalia, Gońda Paweł, Jagielski Mateusz, Jankowska Barbara, Kaczmarczyk Julia, Kłaś Małgorzata, Koćma Paweł, Koleszka Joanna, Kowalska Dagmara, Krynicka Natalia, Liszka Anna, Mucha Aleksandra, Naleźnik Katarzyna, Nowak Kamila, Pasternak Maja, Piotrowski Jan, Pysz Izabela, Rdest Katarzyna, Ressel Zofia, Rosa Julia, Rydz Damian, Skalska Adrianna, Sobczyk Magdalena, Stinia Hubert, Szymła Sebastian, Tatar Julia, Uchacz Angelika, Wierciak Aleksandra, Wrzesień Sylwia

I. Totalitarianism and concentration camps

Origins of totalitarianism

“Totalitarianism is typical for countries that have imperial ambitions and an urge for modernization, but do not have any democratic traditions. In Germany, this was supplemented by extreme anti-Semitism (i.e. aversion, discrimination and hostility towards Jews and people of Jewish origin) and racism. By fulfilling the idea of the superiority of the Aryan race, Adolf Hitler initiated a chain of tragic events. Concentration camps were created in order to cleanse the world from «Untermenschen»,”

Dachau Concentration Camp 1933-1945

“The Dachau Concentration Camp was founded in March 1933 and was the first Nazi concentration camp on the German soil. At first, it was meant for isolating members of the political opposition against Hitler’s regime, the clergy (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox) and Jews. Later, it was also used for detaining the Roma, Jehovah Witnesses, homosexuals and prisoners transferred from other camps. The Dachau Concentration Camp served as an example for other similar facilities. A variety of medical experiments were conducted on prisoners, including inducing and then treating sepsis, malaria or hypothermia, examining body reaction with rarefied air, drinking seawater. From among the 6,000 inmates who were subjects of those experiments, 2,073 did not survive. The camp was liberated by American troops on April 29th, 1945.”

Victims of the Dachau Concentration Camp

“About 150,000 prisoners were murdered in Dachau, whereas throughout the whole period of the German occupation of Poland (1939-1945) - over 3 million Poles and 3 million Polish citizens of Jewish descent were killed. This amounts to almost 6 million Polish citizens.”

“The Jews – the main enemy of the Third Reich – were the largest group of prisoners in Dachau. Their fate was truly horrifying. At first their property was taken away and they were confined to ghettos. After that, they were put into stock cars and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau and other extermination sites – the concentration camps, where terrible scenes were taking place. It is very hard to believe that «people prepared this fate for people».”

“Enemies of the Third Reich – men, women, adults, and children – were the victims of Nazi crimes. Concentration camp guards treated them all with the same inhumane cruelty. A number of concentration camps were located on the Polish soil (for this reason, some foreign media often mistakenly refer to them as «Polish concentration camps>>»), so it is only natural that there were plenty of Polish prisoners. The Jews were, however, the main victims. It is important to remember that extermination of the Jewish nation was at the foundation of Nazi ideology.”

Contemporary totalitarian regimes and concentration camps

“We think that the subject of totalitarianism is still up to date, due to its role in history, the still existing totalitarian states, and current world affairs that have the potential to awaken demons of the past. That is why it is crucial that the memory of the past does not pass into oblivion.”

“The country, where a totalitarian regime is currently at its worst is probably the North Korea. Despite widely developed media and information systems, we still lack insight of what is going on inside that country, as one of the features of the totalitarian state is lack of transparency. Only small pieces of information make it to the public sphere. We now know that there are work camps in North Korea, which are officially called re-educational camps. In theory, their main aim is to re-socialize those who are unable to function in the society. In practice, however, those camps are prisons, where dissidents who were brave enough to criticize the regime, are incarcerated. Opposing the authorities is a major crime, and being thrown into such a camp is considered as an act of mercy, as normally, acts of disobedience are punished by death. One can be sent to such a camp for even the most trivial or absurd charges, such as not paying a proper homage to the supreme leader’s effigy, or listening to Western music.”

“In his article in <<The Guardian>>, a British journalist John Ezard describes the results of research conducted by Professor Robert Gallately on an analysis of 23 titles from the German press released between 1933 (when Hitler becomes the Chancellor of the Third Reich) and 1944. It turns out that in that period, the press covered the functioning of concentration camps, although the subject of gas chambers and mass executions was not

present. Gallately claims that it is true that some Germans had no idea about the real purpose of concentration camps, but only because they did not ask any questions. All the information was there in the mass media, particularly the press:

«They knew because the camps and the measures which led up to them had been prominently and proudly reported step by step in thousands of officially-inspired German media articles and posters». »²¹⁶

It is hardly possible to claim that civilians living in Dachau had no idea about what was happening right in their neighbourhood. It remains unexplained whether they accepted the existence of the concentration camp for the good of the Reich, or because they were too afraid or helpless to do anything.”

Stigma of the concentration camps

“The city of Dachau carries a stigma of the concentration camp, and its inhabitants have had to accept the history of their native land until the present day.”

²¹⁶ J. Ezard, *Germans knew of Holocaust horror about death camps*, „The Guardian”, 17.02.2001.

II. Significance of memorial sites

A necessity to commemorate

“Remembering the tragic, totalitarian past is not easy, but due to human sacrifice, it is necessary. We have the advantage to live in times when we still can hear testimonies of former prisoners of concentration camps. For this reason, people should feel obliged to hear them out carefully, and pass their knowledge to the next generations, so that these memories would not sink into oblivion.”

“Even today, the Holocaust and Porajmos still evoke feelings of repulsion, disgust and anger, stemming from the fact that *people prepared this fate for people*.²¹⁷ Nowadays, 68 years after the end of the World War II, it is more important to uphold the memory of those tragic events and pay tribute to the victims, rather than keep the negative feelings alive.”

Memory and identity

“Certain events stay alive in human memory for a long time. Nations with strong identity and historical memory do not forget their sacrifices and their people’s attitudes. Being passive and silent might not be a sin, but it is not virtuous, brave or righteous and definitely not the path that everyone should follow. Everyone deserves to be remembered. Memory fades away quickly, so we should respect it and nurture it, as its existence is a precondition for our existence. One should not be afraid of putting up great monuments that commemorate events from the past.”

²¹⁷ Zofia Nałkowska, *Medaliony*, Wrocław.

“Visiting memorial sites is very emotive and thought provoking. The memory of our ancestors forms our own identities, influences our perceptions of things and guides us. By cultivating memory, we know who we are and we are able to learn from heritage and experiences of past generations not to repeat their mistakes.”

Origin of Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

“Nearly the entire area of the former camp has been utilized. The larger part of it was adapted for public space and houses. However, a small piece of land was carved out to be used as a museum. It is meant to be a stark reminder of the atrocities that happened there, so that there would be no accusations of trying to erase inconvenient history. An effort was made so that the prisoners of all nationalities and denominations are equally commemorated. Memory and everyday life are skilfully and proportionally connected. The area of the former camp gradually and harmoniously merged with the surrounding neighbourhood and became its integral part.”

Dachau as a memorial site

“The sole existence of places like Jugendherberge in Dachau illustrates that issues of totalitarianism and Hitler’s war crimes are not neglected. Seminars on the camp’s history have been organized here for years. It is not about accepting responsibility for the camp’s creation, but rather about raising awareness about its functions and victims. The locals seem to be used to seeing groups of youth in their little town. There is a special bus going between the train station and the museum, and very often it is full. The

former concentration camp is the main tourist attraction. Local authorities are keenly aware of that fact and adjust their policies accordingly.”

Memorial sites and reticence

“The Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site opened in 1965. At the same time, a monument was also built next to the museum. It represents triangular labels that were attached to the prisoners’ clothes in order to distinguish the six different categories of inmates: (1) red triangle – political prisoner, (2) green – a criminal, (3) blue – an immigrant, (4) violet – a Jehovah Witness, (5) pink – a homosexual, (6) black – unsocial prisoner, e.g. drug addict. Unfortunately, the aforementioned monument does not include all those colours. Pink, violet, green and black were left out. Why is that the case? Even though the post-war FRG was a democratic state, certain categories of former prisoners were omitted in the memorial, thus deprived of due respect for what they went through. The monument is then two-pronged: on the one hand it commemorates the victims, but on the other it disregards the «inconvenient prisoners» that did not fit into still existent totalitarian ideas. To quote Dietz de Loos: «The eyewitnesses of Nazi atrocities are passing away. Greater engagement of victims’ nation states is necessary in order to preserve the memory about the camp. Otherwise it will pass into oblivion».”

III. Commemorative practices

a) Artwork

Art of Xawery Dunikowski

“Dunikowski arrived in Auschwitz on 20 June 1940, at the age of 65 as prisoner no. 774. He managed to survive only thanks to the help and attention from his co-prisoners, who – on numerous occasions – protected him while he was in the camp’s hospital. Hospitalisation did not guarantee safety, however, it allowed him to restore his strength and relieved him from attending endless and cruel roll calls, during which the SS abused the prisoners by kicking and beating Dunikowski was a frequent guest in the hospital. From 1944, until the liberation on January 27, 1945, he stayed there permanently. In that period, he painted dozens of portraits of other patients. After the liberation, he restarted his artistic career at the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow There were many men like Dunikowski. Even though not all of them survived, their artwork remains. The fact that we can admire it today we owe to brave people who risked their lives to save those masterpieces. Today, these works of art depict memories of a brutal past.”

Art of Izaak Celnikier

“Izaak Celnikier (died in 2011) is a great example of a Polish-Jewish painter who preserved the memory of victims in his work. Memories from ghettos and concentration camps were his main themes. His works were on exhibitions in Poland in 1992 in Zachęta Gallery in Warsaw, and in 1996 in the National Museum in Poznan. In 2005, the National Museum in Krakow organised an exhibition entitled: «Izaak Celnikier. Painting.

Graphic. Drawing». One of his paintings is called *Birkenau* and it illustrates tormented and starved figures of Jews, who are no more than shadows of who they once were. It is a very dramatic piece on cruelty directed against prisoners who were destined to die.”

b) Literature

“Being the conveyor of truth and one of the main sources of knowledge about concentration camps, literature makes the unwanted and inconvenient past difficult to forget. Tadeusz Borowski’s short stories and Zofia Nałkowska’s *Medallions* are the most prominent examples of such literature. *Medallions* consist of several stories told by victims, witnesses, wronged and saved from concentration camps. They describe the shocking facts from the time of World War II, the feelings of those imprisoned in concentration camps, the everyday functioning of the camps and the so called «camp industry», i.e.: what was done with the victims’ clothes, accessories, human skin and fat. Concentration camps were in fact large manufactures aimed at exploitation of people, either by forced labour or through medical experiments. Borowski describes the concentration camp as a «template for totalitarian state» and refers directly to Nazi ideology. He depicts domination based on terror and unlawfulness – Nazi postulates become laws in the camps, where the main objective of authorities is to take full control over peoples’ lives. The Germans needed labour force and they used prisoners as such. Inmates were treated like objects; hence they started to perceive themselves and their co-prisoners that way too. They fought between themselves for almost everything – food, work, etc. There were two realities in the camp – one was the world of the masters, the other one, the world of the slaves treated like animals and (useful or useless) objects.”

c) Remembrance through symbols on memorial sites

“In order to commemorate all the Jews murdered in the Dachau camp, a Jewish community built a Jewish chapel memorial there, in a close proximity to the Catholic memorial and Protestant memorial. It bears resemblance to a crematory with a chimney. It is made of black stone and is a very moving sight. When inside, one can feel as if it really is an interior of a crematory. Another memorial commemorating the Holocaust in Dachau is a small monument erected between the larger crematory and the area where ashes of those cremated were scattered. It is made of white stone and has a look of the Star of David with a menorah on top. Below, there is an inscription in three languages: «Do not forget». Additionally, in order to preserve the memory and pass it on, the International Dachau Committee organises annual meetings.”

d) Role of eyewitnesses in remembering

The significance of meetings with eyewitnesses: learning and understanding

“Eyewitnesses who tell their stories to the whole world are the most important sources of knowledge about life in concentration camps. Each story is different, but all of them are tragic. In preparation for our study trip to Germany, we met with Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz. She was less than 3 years old when she became Auschwitz prisoner no. 70072. She was separated from her mother and told that the mother died, which later turned out to be untrue. After the War, she was reunited with her family. Lidia told us her story very peacefully, but we were all deeply moved by her words.

In Germany, we met another witness during the workshops. His name was Abba Naor. He was born in Lithuania, in the Jewish family ... Speaking to Lidia and Abba helped us understand the tragedy that took place during World War II.”

“We should be grateful to people like Lidia and Abba, for their willingness to share their memories, thus helping others to find out about living in concentration camps and functioning of the totalitarian regime. Thanks to their contributions, the memory of those tragic time will forever remain in the consciousness of future generations.”

Meetings with eyewitnesses – communicative memory

“The subject of totalitarian past is still discussed in our society and that itself greatly exemplifies the fact that memory about those events is still alive. People who remember it pass their memories onto younger generations. Grandparents often tell their grandchildren about totalitarianism, Hitler and the widespread evil. There are also people who were directly involved in that nightmare but managed to survive. They share their stories during conference panels and meetings with the youth. The sole fact that these people are able to recall those awful events and describe them to others is the best manifestation of how strong their spirit is.”

Meetings with eyewitnesses – emotions

“Lidia Skibicka-Maksymowicz was one of the witnesses we had an opportunity to meet. She did not shed a single tear while telling her horrifying story. All of us were, however, very choked-up.”

Meetings with eyewitnesses – Lidia

“Lidia was born in Minsk; her father was an officer in the Red Army. When Stalin ordered to burn down her village, she and her family found shelter in the forest, among partisans. At the age of four, she was taken to the Auschwitz concentration camp, along with her mother and grandparents. The journey in an overcrowded stock car was very long and exhausting – a lot of people did not make it to the destination. Right after arrival she was separated from her family. Her mother was assigned to forced labour and Lidia was taken to the children’s barracks. That was the last time she saw her grandparents. Camp number 70072 was tattooed on her arm. It was very painful, but she neither cried nor screamed, as she was accustomed to silent behaviour when she was hiding with the partisans. When she entered the camp, a Jewish boy, a little older than she was, gave her some hints as how to survive in the camp: no crying, no screaming. She was surrounded by death – every day. She used to wake up next to dead children who were lying on the same bunk. Death became so common that she no longer even noticed it. She also often suffered from diarrhoea. Her bunk was lice-ridden, her blanket stiff from dirt and there were rats everywhere. During the whole 15 months she spent in the camp, not even once was she able to take a bath. Women who were supposed to take care of children did not want to get near them. Her mother sometimes sneaked into her barrack and brought her some

bread. Lidia, however, did not want the food, she just asked her mother to stay for a while. She started to suffer from hospitalism – the orphan disease – and she spent her days just sitting in one spot and shaking. She was also a «patient» of the infamous Josef Mengele. He conducted a series of transfusions on her, replacing her blood with saline solution. Lidia recalls that the situation slightly improved in 1944, when teenage female scouts who took part in the Warsaw Uprising were brought to the camp. They took care of children, taught them how to say their prayers and sing songs. Right before the Russians came, the Germans sped up the extermination to the point where they were unable to burn all the bodies in the crematories. Corpses were piling up outside and they smelled terribly. People from the neighbouring town knew what was going on, but were unable to help, as anyone who approached the camp was shot at. Right before the camp's liberation, Lidia's mother was sent on a *path of death* to Wodzisław. On the day of liberation, the inhabitants of Auschwitz came to the camp and took care of the children. Lidia instantly hugged a lady who approached her. This lady and her husband took Lidia home with them. Living in the concentration camp left physical scars – as a child, Lidia was constantly ill. There were also psychological wounds – she used to put other children in line and selected those, who «go to work, or to the gas chamber». When she turned 19, she started searching for her mother. The search was successful. Lidia's story, unlike many others, has a happy-end.”

“Lidia now lives in Poland and has never returned home. She considers herself as a strong person, but she still can feel the wounds and pains of the past. She is not emotional or full of warmth; rather, she is filled with anxiety. Lidia is an example of how the traumatic experience of living in the concentration camp can influence one's psychological condition and

personality. Wounds of the past will always remain open. It is, nevertheless, very important that the witnesses of this enormous tragedy never stop sharing their stories. They are the most valuable and authentic sources of knowledge. Thanks to their testimonies, the memories of what happened will never fade and will be transferred to next generations.”

Meetings with eyewitnesses – Abba

“In Dachau, we had an opportunity to meet another witness – Abba Naor. He was born in Lithuania. Right before the War, his family had moved to Vilnius, and then, unaware of the situation, they decided to return home. Their house was already occupied, so they moved in with their family. At the age of 13, Naor and his family were moved to the ghetto. There were 26 of them living in a two-room flat. Some of his family members were murdered during the so-called «Great Action» – mass murder of Lithuanian Jews. After the liquidation of the ghetto, his father was moved to Allach – one of Dachau’s sub-camps. He, his mother and younger brother were placed in Stutthof. His mother and brother did not survive the camp and Abba was put in the Utting camp, which he and his co-prisoners had to build from scratch. After that, he worked as tram stoker, which enabled him to go outside the camp and collect food for himself and other prisoners. After a while, he volunteered to be transferred to Kaufering (Dachau’s sub-camp), hoping he would find his father there. Abba regretted that decision, as conditions in Kaufering were much worse than in Utting: he had to walk long distances for work, where he unloaded cement bags. It had to be unloaded quickly, or else the SS-men would beat the workers. Right before liberation, he took part in the march of death. He was liberated near Waakirchen by Americans. He managed to reunite with his father and they

started thinking about going back to Lithuania, but finally decided to stay in Munich. Later they tried to get to Palestine illegally, but the crew of their ship was detained on Cyprus. A year later, Abba managed to get to Israel, where he began working as a civil servant, got married and started a family.”

“Abba Naor is a former prisoner of KL Dachau, with whom we met and spoke about how it was to live in a concentration camp. He told us that it was very difficult to return to a place that brought back so many horrific memories. It was like going through all this hell once again. Abba made us realise that the Jewish community is divided. Some Jews claim that it is better to remember about what happened during World War II, but others would prefer to forget about it. There is another reason why the Holocaust is one of the most traumatic experiences for the Jews. According to Judaism, the Jews are the Chosen People to be in a covenant with God. Going through such terrifying experiences, full of pain and suffering, a question arises – why did God let that happen? Are we not the Chosen People? Extermination of Jews raised questions of God’s very existence.”

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