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The Bavarian Quarter in the Classroom: Exploring and Learning

Suggestions, Ideas, Projects for Students and Teachers

by **Lowell Blackman**

A Few Words Introduction

Having strolled through the pleasant, tree-lined streets of the Bavarian Quarter on numerous occasions, I have become familiar with the signs that are part of the neighborhood memorial, "Places of Remembrance", created by the artists Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock. This particular "decentralized" memorial represents one of the most compelling memorials in Berlin. It is, for me, far more moving than the enormous, abstract – albeit impressive - "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe" ("Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas"). It feels more personal because it is about people, because it refers to specific laws directed towards those people. It compels us to visualize people in that community caught up in the maelstrom of hysteria and the tragic reality of their day. It is a chilling reminder of an episode in recent history seared into the collective memory of millions.

Each sign in the "Places of Remembrance" project is a memorial. Each sign with its image and its law is testimony to a moment in time that impacted lives in irreversible ways. Together, they tell the story of a step-by-step, act-by-act denial of a people's humanity, with each new law one more phase in the gradual process of separating, isolating, excluding, and finally physically removing people from society. Each sign represents a moment in time when one Jewish person and another Jewish person and another became a living shadow.

Dispersed throughout the peaceful, leafy streets of the neighborhood as they may be, the "decentralized" signs of the memorial function as one large memorial whose reach and meaning are far greater than the 50x70 centimeter size of each individual sign. The bold colors and simplicity of each image stand in stark contrast to the cold harshness of the text on the reverse side written in official black type on clear white.

The signs tell a singular tale in the escalating story of the deprivation of basic civil rights of citizens no longer deemed by law to be citizens. Standing beneath each sign, one pauses to wonder how this law or that law affected an individual, a family, a couple, children, or older people as dates on the signs attest to a process leading to destruction. It's something the artists hoped to convey – the law was one more component of a process that neither wavered nor faltered in final vision.

The incremental process behind promulgating the decrees and laws was itself insidious and deceptive. Perhaps it meant to lull people into a false sense of security, somewhat reminiscent of the parable of the frog sitting in a pot of water: As the water gradually becomes warmer, the frog tries to reassure himself that it will be fine, he can manage – until the water reaches the boil. "Oh, it's only this rule," say some Jews. "Oh, this one isn't so bad. Inconvenient, yes, but not so bad." "We can handle this." "We'll create our own schools." "Don't be so disheartened - the Nazis are a passing phase." "Germany, the nation of Goethe, Schiller, and Bach will eventually throw Hitler and his scoundrels out." And so on.

Gunter Demnig, the artist who conceived the Stolpersteine project cited the Talmud when he noted, "A person is only forgotten when his or her name is forgotten". While each stolperstein names an individual Jew and marks a place of residence, birth, and fate, the Places of Remembrance signs speak of the Jews as a community, as a people. The signs tell the gradual story of the events and laws that led up to the ultimate fate of that individual named on the stolperstein.

The text of the laws and decrees are all intentionally written in the present tense. Why? What effect does this have? What did the artists want us to think? To feel? To imagine? Did they want us to travel back in time and imagine the impact and meaning each new law might have? A moment to ask students.

The randomness of the location of the signs, in many cases, is interesting, almost as though one "stumbles across" them by chance. There is a surprise element to each new one encountered, raising new thoughts and responses about its impact on the people to whom they were directed. This law affected the lives of Jewish people in this building and those across the street and those down the block and those around the corner.

At the same time, a good number of signs have been "strategically" placed, linking the past and the present-day man-made environment. Here are just a few of many examples.

One of the signs bearing the image of a simple hopscotch game sits on a lamppost outside a neighborhood playground toward the end of Heilbronner Strasse. The text on the reverse forbids "Aryan and non-Aryan children" from playing together. Perhaps, the artists wanted us to be unnerved by the juxtaposition of the innocence of this children's park with the

odiousness of this decree.

A doctor's practice sign – "Praxis" - near Bayerischer Platz 4 advises the public that the Berlin public health insurance company will no longer provide reimbursement for visits to Jewish doctors. Three stolpersteine sit in front of the building, one of them belonging to Dr. Kurt Moser. Born in 1891, the inscription notes that he lived and worked in the building, but in 1938 was forbidden to practice. He later went into hiding, was betrayed – "DENUNZIERT" - and deported to Auschwitz where he was murdered.

Outside the Evangelische Kirche zum Heilbronner at Heilbronner Strasse 20, a sign on a lamppost shows a simply drawn golden goblet while the text informs us that "Baptism and conversion of Jews will have no bearing on the issue of race", the Nuremberg Laws on race and racial classification having been enacted a year before.

A sign showing two golden wedding rings is located on Badensche Strasse on the north side of the Schöneberg City Hall, an official government venue for couples to be married. When the Nuremberg Laws went into effect on September 15, 1935, previously conducted mixed marriages became invalid, and any future mixed marriages could be punished by law.

Lastly, this example, with reflections from the artist, Renata Stih, herself: "In front of the delicatessen Esskultur Lindner (at Grunewaldstrasse 57), we put the sign that Jews and Poles [were] not allowed to buy cakes and sweets. We placed it there on purpose, so people would see it coming in and out of the store."

The Bavarian Quarter in the Classroom - For Teachers

Prior to conducting a walking tour of the neighborhood, or sending groups of students off on their own, it would be a good idea for students to familiarize themselves with the memorial, its location, and the artists' ideas, intentions, and concepts behind the project. I would also recommend that students read some background information about the history and development of the Bavarian Quarter.

I would also suggest that students pick up a small, easy to carry A5 notebook which could serve as a journal and in which they could follow their progress through the project, jotting down thoughts, ideas, facts, personal reflections and feelings about what they see, where they see it, what they think, and what they learn.

In a sense, they will not only be learning about the Places of Remembrance memorial, but also about themselves as they navigate their own course through the project and reflect upon what they see and learn. A "diary", a journal, has immediacy and mirrors one's individual thoughts and learning experience and serves as a collection of personal reflections of the entire project itself.

Here are a few ideas to think about as you begin planning. No doubt, you have many of your own about how to plan this unit, but these are a few I have thought about and would just like to share them. Consider what you would like the focus of the study unit/topic on the Places of Remembrance memorial to be and how you would like to engage the students in the class:

- How much time will you be able to give the class overall to focus on the Places of Remembrance memorial?
- How much time in class will be spent orienting the students to the history and development of the Bavarian Quarter?
- How much time will you spend learning about the Nazi era and Nazi laws as they pertained to Jews in Germany? To all Germans?
- How much time will you spend touring the neighborhood? How many visits will you make?

- Will the class take an "official" guided walking tour? Self-guided small group tours? Pairs or Threes? Each with particular streets and signs? Specific signs that were chosen or assigned?
- Are there students (even older students) who are already familiar with the memorial? Can they introduce the memorial to the rest of the class?
- Can a group of students be called on to provide an orientation and present the class with information about the memorial? About the neighborhood?
- Diary / Journal writing along the tour – impressions, reflections, facts? Would the task be to gather information, to gather impressions, or both?
- When students return to the classroom after their walk around the neighborhood, how will their experiences, impressions, and newly gained knowledge be shared: Discussions panels? Individual, paired, grouped presentations? Creative activities? Essays? Diary and Journal work? Fictional writing from factual reading – creating people in history impacted by the laws on the signs and writing journal entries?
- Large format 'Parallel Timelines'? Events in Germany, the world, and for the Jewish people in Germany targeted by the laws shown on the memorial signs? Signs can be placed on the timeline and seen in their historical and cultural context and what purpose the law or decree served.
- Will they produce a video walking tour? A film using Windows Movie Maker or iMovie for MacOS (or Windows)? A "Then-and-Now" type film showing scenes and photos from the past and those of the present? An audio walking tour? Photos for a video film? PowerPoint Presentation? Will the class produce their own very large map of the signs? A map of the stolpersteine in the neighborhood?

There are 80 signs, but which signs might be more "important" than others? The restrictions and laws shown on each sign impacted the lives of families and individuals in different ways and to greater or lesser degrees.

To be sure, the artists felt that all 80 signs were important and that each one had consequence in itself. Together, the signs paint a larger tableau of what all these laws meant for the Jewish population. How did they select 80 – not more, not fewer? In fact, they had at least 16 additional drafts of illustrations with texts of laws that were not produced – nicht realisiert. Note that from 1933 until the war began in 1939, more than 400 national laws and regulations placed restrictions on all aspects of public and private lives of Jews while additional laws were enacted by state, regional, and municipal authorities.)

To think about: Which laws touched people more? Who? How? Families? Children? Older people? Breadwinners? Professionals who had studied their profession for years, whether in liberal professions such as doctors, lawyers, professors, teachers, civil servants and other government and municipal employees, or self-employed people such as artisans, tradesmen, or craftspeople. And what of people employed or associated with established institutions in the Jewish community,? Which laws appeared to be petty and trivial? Which laws were damaging, disastrous, or simply demoralizing? Which laws reflected the fundamental core of Nazi culture and ideology? Which laws seemed essential towards the fulfillment of the central tenets of Nazi ideology and, therefore, should be included on a tour?

The Bavarian Quarter in the Classroom - For Students to Know

Some of what's been said before, I'm just repeating here for emphasis. What is most important to keep in mind and for students to understand about the signs of the Places of Remembrance memorial is that seen together, the laws reflected an incremental process that stripped away basic civil rights from Jewish citizens. Law by law by law they were marginalized then excluded from society. This legal process escalated steadily and ceaselessly to the point that made them pariahs in their own land.

Amongst the first laws were those that excluded Jews from their livelihoods and from participation in the realm of German civil society and German culture. Teachers, lawyers, notaries, academics, law professors, and others in the so-called liberal professions were dismissed from their jobs. Exclusion of writers, actors, journalists, book publishers, and musicians followed. Later, Jewish-owned book publishers then bookshops, themselves, were closed.

Once the citizenship status of the Jews in Germany was annulled after the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935, their basic protection under the law was forfeit. What followed was a continuous enactment of laws, some of which felt initially uncomfortable and many of which seemed minor and petty. Limits were placed on the use of buses and trains, on membership in chess clubs, choral groups, sports clubs, use of sports fields, on food purchases and types of food, on the use of public libraries, on driving, hiking groups, going to school, on using the public beach at Wannsee. Jews could no longer receive academic degrees.

Earlier legal limitations eventually became outright bans. Jews were forbidden to own pets, banned from using public telephones, public transportation, and they could not attend the theater, concerts, films, or the opera. Jews later had to give up their cars, their telephones, and in many instances, their homes and apartments. Personal household property such as electric appliances, radios, and typewriters had to be turned in to the authorities. By late 1938, they were restricted from certain neighborhoods in Berlin. In due course, more overt signs of identification were mandated: signs on doors, forced name changes, and the Judenstern – the infamous Yellow Star with the word Jude – Jew – written in mock Hebrew script. The severity of the laws escalated and, step by step, they began to take on much more ominous tones. As of October 23, 1941, Jews were no longer permitted to leave Germany.

Exclusion, marginalization, separation, identification, and isolation, led to removal, deportation, and finally to death. As the artists themselves stated, their purpose was to "show the gradual exclusion, disenfranchisement, expulsion, deportation, and murder of Berlin Jews between 1933 and 1945." And, as Renata Stih noted, the word "Jew" appears in virtually every sign.

Planning the Tour

However you decide to plan your walking tour, I highly recommend that you pick up a copy of the indispensable 24-page booklet by Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock, the creators of the memorial project, Orte des Erinnerns - Places of Remembrance in BERLIN.

Check the website, an excellent introduction to the memorial. Included are links to articles about the memorial written by journalists, historians, and visitors: https://www.stih-schnock.de/remembrance.html

The website also features photographs, images, and texts for some of the signs in the

neighborhood. The official description of the memorial on the website says the following:

"Places of Remembrance / Orte des Erinnerns" is a decentralized memorial in the Bavarian Quarter in the Schoeneberg district of Berlin, which was inaugurated in 1993. 80 double-sided signs are put up on lampposts, depicting images on the one side and on the reverse side condensed versions of anti-Jewish Nazi rules and regulations passed between 1933 and 1945. Together, the words and images force passers-by to remember the almost-forgotten history of this neighborhood, where Albert Einstein, Hannah Arendt, Gisele Freund, and Carl Einstein once lived. Dispersed throughout the area, the memorial becomes a metaphor of the daily deprivation of rights and humiliation, leading to deportations and mass murder of Jews during the Nazi era."

The booklet includes an essay in English by Caroline Wiedmer, "Remembrance in Schöneberg" (also with a link on the website) in which the author shares the story behind the memorial and provides a comprehensive historical look at the Bavarian Quarter, Jewish life in the neighborhood, the changes that came after the Nazis assumed power, and the idea and importance of remembrance. The second article in the booklet, by Barbara Straka, is in German (also accessible on the website). Images of the memorial signs with texts and dates of the laws (in German) grace the pages of her article.

A valuable "tool" included with the booklet is the large, detailed foldout map of the neighborhood, whose perimeter includes all 80 signs. The text for each sign, in German, are on the reverse side and include the date each law was enacted. The newer version of the map has added English next to the German text. Street names and numbers are printed in black, for 1933, and in red for 1993, as names and address numbers have, in cases, changed. Each memorial sign in the neighborhood is indicated on the map with a large green dot, without any indication what the sign says, but the streets are clearly named, and students should have no trouble locating the signs.

The map is entitled Ausgrenzung und Entrechtung, Vertreibung, Deportation, und Ermordung von Berliner Juden in den Jahren von 1933 bis 1945 – "Exclusion and disenfranchisement, expulsion, deportation and murder of Berlin Jews in the years 1933 to 1945" – the official name of the memorial. The reverse side of the map also features several old photos along with the testimonies in German of three older eyewitnesses who lived in the neighborhood before and during the years of the Third Reich and who speak about the Jews and Jewish life there along with changes that came to the neighborhood.

A high resolution map of the neighborhood depicts images of all 80 signs and their general locations but without the texts and dates of the laws. The map can be found on the website of the memorial accessed via a QR code. Note that at the time of this writing, the high resolution map – courtesy Apple Maps - is accessible only for iPhones (and other Apple devices).

The center pages of the booklet are in English and feature images of all 80 signs, their texts, and the dates the laws were enacted. It's quite helpful that the signs are shown in chronological order and allows us to follow the progress of restrictive laws on Jews and how their daily lives became increasingly more difficult.

The booklet is available for purchase directly from the office of the artists by contacting office@stih-schnock.de.

You can also purchase the book (which includes the map) for about 10 euros at Buchladen Bayerischer Platz, Grunewaldstrasse 59 (south side of the street) between Salzburger Strasse and Münchener Strasse, U-Bahn station Bayerischer Platz on the U4 and U7 lines. I checked with them recently and they told me that they had many copies of the booklet in stock. To be on the safe side, you can contact

them: www.buchladen-bayerischer-platz , kontakt@buchladen-bayerischer-platz.de . I'd also recommend purchasing additional copies of the map (1 or 2 euros), so every group or pair of students could have one as they walk around on their own.

Planning the Routes

There are two convenient locations at which you can begin your walking tour. One is at the Bayerischer Platz U-Bahn stations (U4 and U7) where, on the mezzanine floor in one of the stations, there is an exhibition of historical photographs of the neighborhood in its early days and as it developed. Included in the exhibit is a profile of Georg Haberland whose company purchased the land between 1898 and 1908, laid down roads, and constructed residential buildings along carefully planned streets. It's a nice idea for students to see what the neighborhood looked like in the past as they stroll along the streets of today. They may even be able to recognize some of the old buildings in photos that still stand today.

The Café Haberland above the U-Bahn station houses the Haberland Exhibition about the neighborhood, and they also have a website, www.cafe-haberland.de. I picked up a useful brochure in both German and English that opens to a large map of the neighborhood with the locations and names of famous people who had once lived there and, in some cases, were hidden there during the war, while the reverse side provides useful information and suggested walking tours.

One of the advantages of beginning your tour here is that the Bayerischer Platz U-Bahn station pretty much falls in the center of the Places of Remembrance memorial, so students can explore the streets both north and south of the park area where signs are located. Naturally, this depends upon the signs that were chosen or assigned, or if students, map in hand, are just allowed to walk around and chance upon the signs themselves.

You can also begin your walking tour in the park at Viktoria-Luise-Platz (U-Bahn 4), one U-Bahn station north of the Bayerischer Platz U-Bahn station. From the park, walk down Münchener Strasse, cross Hohenstaufenstrasse and continue down Münchener Strasse. You can also walk along Hohenstaufenstrasse to Heilbronner Strasse or to Landshuter Strasse. All three streets have memorial signs. Check the map.

Exploring and Learning

As a tourist, I find visiting the Places of Remembrance in BERLIN a moving experience. As an educator, my immediate thoughts turn to practical ideas of how to bring the memorial into the classroom. Ideas flow fairly easily and "typical teacher questions" keep coming. The real challenge, though, is in capturing the spirit of the memorial and its message for students. There are so many memorial signs from which to choose, each with its unique message and its own importance. In this article, I'd like to share a small sampling of assignments I have put together – ideas, questions, writing, media, research, reflections – and how I believe a teacher might bring the memorial into the classroom. I've called these "Exploring and Learning" as I hope students might find their own way, their own answers, their own reflections and, ultimately, their own learning.

Exploring and Learning: Marriage and the Nuremberg Laws

Memorial Sign: Two Wedding Rings (Badensche Str., Schöneberg City Hall near Salzburger Str.)

On September 15, 1935, two Nuremberg Laws were enacted. The first law, the "The Reich Citizenship Law", declared that only "Aryans" could be citizens of the Reich. And since Jews were classified as non-Aryan, this law deprived them of citizenship and made them stateless residents in their own country. Once the citizenship status of the Jews in Germany was nullified by this law, their basic protection under the law was lost.

The memorial sign with the two wedding rings relates to the second Nuremberg Law, which addressed marriage and intimate relations between "citizens of German descent and Jews". In fact, it uses the term, "deutschen Blutes und Juden", i.e., translated as "citizens of German blood and Jews".

- Why do you think the government decided to intervene in such a private, intimate aspect of people's lives?
- What do you think were the purpose and intention of the second law? Why?
- Discuss the impact of this law upon couples in "mixed marriages" and upon their children, as well as the invalidation of their marriage.
- Explain why you think the second Nuremberg Law is called "the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor."
- Look up a chart that illustrates the Nuremberg Laws and the racial classifications according to the new law. What are your thoughts about how people were classified and how they might have arrived at such classifications?
- The artists, Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock, did not create a sign that addressed the Nuremberg Law depriving Jews of their German citizenship. Why do you think they chose to create a sign about marriage but not one about citizenship?
- Why do you think the artists chose to locate this sign on the block of the Schöneberg Rathaus, the Schöneberg City Hall?
- Design a memorial sign that illustrates the first Nuremberg Law about citizenship.

Exploring and Learning: Names and Identity

Memorial Sign: First Names (Münchener Str. 35 off Grunewaldstr.)

On August 17, 1938, the "*Second Ordinance for the Implementation of the Law on the Change of Surnames and First Names*" went into effect, introduced by Nazi minister Wilhelm Frick. Essentially, as of January 1939, Jewish men were required to add the middle name "Israel" to their first name while Jewish women were required to add "Sara" if their original first names were considered "German" and not typically "Jewish". Lists of "Jewish" names were provided.

Thus Max Meyer and Elsa Meyer became Max Israel Meyer and Elsa Sara Meyer and their new names were painted on their suitcase, which I found (and photographed) on display among many others at the site of Auschwitz I in Poland.

On Münchener Strasse, along the Löcknitz Schule, a white memorial sign features first names written in color likely in the handwriting styles of schoolchildren. The names appear to be typical "German" names of the day and the text on the sign refers to the Name Change Law.

- Why do you think the artists designed the sign to look as if the names were written by children? What do you think of this idea?
- What was the purpose of enacting this "name change" law?
- At the same time the law was enacted, the authorities provided a list of approved Jewish first names for newborn children. Find 10 Jewish names that were approved for naming.

- List 5-10 "German" names that Jews were not allowed to use when they named newborns List 5-10 "German" names Jews could keep if they added the "Jewish names" 'Israel' and 'Sara'.
- The names 'Israel' and 'Sara' were Jewish names from the Bible. Many German Jews were quite assimilated into German society and culture and had little connection to their Jewish heritage or to religion. How do you think this law might have affected them? As a non-religious Jewish person, write a journal or diary entry with reflections on this new law and what your thoughts and feelings are about it.

Exploring and Learning: Nazi Education

Memorial Sign: Blonde Braids (Heilbronner Str. 6)

About seven months after Hitler assumed power in Germany in 1933, the Nazis began revamping the educational system. In April, Jewish teachers were dismissed from their posts and many Jewish students were expelled from certain schools. In September of that year, it became mandatory to teach subjects such as "Racial Science" and "Race Studies", as the text of the sign shows.

Why did the artists use blonde braids to represent the teaching of "Racial Science" and "Race Studies"? What was the organization, Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Girls)? What was the counterpart organization for boys?

What were the stated purposes of these youth organizations? What activities did they engage in? What else did they learn

Genetics, Genealogy, and Racial Science in Pictorial Form (or Genetics, Ancestry and Racial Studies) was a book of posters for schools for the purpose of teaching Nazi racial doctrines. The material stresses Nazi eugenics doctrine, and makes it clear that Germany would be better off if the "inferior" population was eliminated.

Alfred Vogel, *Erblehre, Abstammngs- und Rassenkunde in bildlicher Darstellung*, 2nd edition (Stuttgart: Verlag für nationale Literatur Gebr. Roth, 1939).

https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/vogel.htm © 2008 by Randall Bytwerk

- What were some of the things being taught in this classroom book?
- What are your thoughts about them?

In recent years, we have heard many people saying, "Trust the science", "Believe science", and "The science is settled."

Nazi racial policy and race education were considered to be science-based and not merely an ideology. Schools taught this policy as Rassenkunde. The field of eugenics became part of the curriculum and an Office of Racial Policy was established to deal with these matters. To the Nazis, "the science was settled."

Poster published by Neues Volk ("New People"), a magazine founded in 1933 and published monthly by the Rassepolitischen Amt der NSDAP (Office of Racial Policy of the Nazi Party). The poster says: "60,000 RM is what this

person suffering from hereditary illness costs the community in his lifetime. Fellow citizen, that is your money too. Read Neues Volk. The monthly magazine of the Office of Racial Policy of the NSDAP."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neues_Volk#/media/File:Neues_Volk_eugenics_poster,_c._1937_(brightened).jpeg

- Conduct research into the Nazi school curriculum that taught race studies and science. List five of the claims they made and taught that they argued were undeniable scientific facts.
- What was the Eugenics Movement? Why was it adopted by the Nazis? What other nations had active Eugenics societies, many of which included members in prominent positions of society?
- What was the Euthanasia program? Who instituted it and why? What happened as a result and how and why did it end?
- What was the Lebensborn Program? What was its purpose? When was it established and by whom? Who participated in the program? What were the unseen and long-lasting effects of this program upon the people who were part of it?

- A mathematics lesson from a Nazi textbook asks, "What is the cost of care for the hereditary sick?" What do you think was the intention of this math exercise?

(Courtesy of the Wiener Holocaust Library Collections)

The Poisonous Mushroom (Der Giftpilz) was printed in 1938 by Julius Streicher's publishing house. It was written by Ernst Hiemer and illustrated by Fips, a popular artist at the time. The book was aimed particularly at children and was sometimes used in the schools. The book contains 17 short stories, each illustrated with a stereotypical image of a Jew committing some act of malice, harm, or offending a German by his behavior.

https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/thumb.htm

Students working in groups or in pairs can look at this children's book as well as the poster book for older students. Divide up the chapters and discuss the following:

- What is a stereotype?
- What is the purpose of stereotypes?
- How can stereotypes be effectively used as propaganda?
- In the book, which specific stereotype does each chapter deal with?
- In your opinion, are any of these stereotypes still "alive"?
- In your opinion, who might still want to promote these stereotypes?
- Stereotypes of Jewish people have existed for centuries and in many places in the world. Thinking about time and place:
- Conduct some research about stereotypes depicting Jewish people that go back in time. Hint: there are late Medieval and Renaissance woodcuts, etchings, and engravings as well as depictions in stained glass church windows

and statues, some of which go into the 19th and 20th Century. Choose three examples. How are Jewish people depicted?

- Stereotypes and negative images of Jewish people can be found in propaganda today in many places around the world. How are Jewish people and stereotypes of Jewish people (and more recently, Israel and Israelis) depicted?

Exploring and Learning: The Jewish Star

Memorial Sign: Striped T-shirt (Rosenheimer Str. 25)

On September 1, 1941, a new ordinance went into effect whereby Jews over six years of age were required to purchase and wear a yellow star - Judenstern - with the word Jude – Jew – sewn on the upper left side over the heart. The word Jude was written in a "Faux Hebrew" script, that is, letters meant to resemble Hebrew writing.

Pictured here is a piece of cloth from a bolt of fabric. Courtesy Holocaust Center for Humanity https://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/badges-docent-training)

The Places of Remembrance memorial sign depicts a striped T-shirt.

- Why do you think the artists chose to illustrate the law this way?
- Why do you think that they did not show the image of the "Yellow Star"?
- What was the reaction and response of German Jews to this law?
- What was the real purpose of this law?
- You are 12 years old. Write a diary entry when you learn of this law and a second entry after the first day you have worn it in public.

Look at the poster for the Election of 1932, Hindenburg vs. Hitler.

- How would you describe the script or typography that you see?
- What do the differences in the two scripts imply?

During WW II, Nazi occupation authorities in conquered regions of Europe also initially required Jews to wear the yellow star or another form of designated identification for Jews.

- What did they look like in other lands, e.g., France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Croatia, Poland, and others?

52 Memorials of Persecution and Resistance in and near Berlin

*by **Yonathan Bar-On***

Berlin is full of memories and memorials to the years 1933-1945. In addition, its walkability and highly convenient public transport system make the city a great place to visit with teachers of all subjects, as well as with high school and college students learning about Nazi-Germany. In this article I will give an overview of museums and monuments related to World War II and the Nazi regime. These are all sites that help us remember what happened in Germany and Europe in those years, and that honor the memory of the victims and of those who resisted the Nazi regime. For the sake of clarity, I divided the overview into four parts: the Nazi regime and its (non-Jewish) victims; the Shoah and Jewish life before the Holocaust; Soviet Memorials; Resistance to the Nazis.

All the sites in this overview appear in a Google Maps document that complements this article. Each site that appears in the article has a link to Google Maps and/or to other online info. In the case of museums and other places that have opening hours, the link leads to all the relevant information: location, opening hours, a website. In most of these places, entrance is free, but payment may be needed in order to rent an audio guide or reserve guided tours, workshops etcetera. All that information can be found on the museums' websites.

My map and the links can help you plan a tour of any number of sites that are relevant to you, your colleagues, your students etc., and to find your way – by car, on foot, by public transport – to the various memorials. Where relevant, I added links to material on the Centropa website or references to the Centropa's German Jewish Sourcebook. If the latter has information on a specific site, the relevant page numbers are given in a note in Google Maps. Since Berlin is so full of history, when planning a tour and looking at my Google Maps document, or when simply walking around, you will often notice that historical sites (related to WWII or to other periods in the rich history of the city and of Germany) are located right next to each other.

The Nazi Regime and its Victims

To paraphrase Elie Wiesel, all Jews were victims of the Nazis, but not all victims of the Nazis were Jews. The first wave of targeted attacks against enemies of National-Socialism came after the Reichstag fire, less than a month after Adolf Hitler was appointed Reichskanzler. That fire became an excuse for Hitler and his party to arrest many of their political opponents, suspending many civic liberties. Today, the Reichstag building houses the German parliament, the Bundestag, which is certainly worth a visit. Visiting the building is free, but advance online registration (I recommend a guided tour with a visit to the dome, if available) is required, and you better make such a reservation as early as possible.

At the Topography of Terror Documentation Center, located at the former Gestapo, SS and Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA) headquarters, you can get a good overview of the structures and the methods that became part of the reign of terror that the Nazis imposed, first on Germany and then on the countries they came to occupy and control. The documentation center offers guided tours, workshops and seminars. Two sites that tell us about the early months of Nazi terror are the former SA prison Papestrasse and the memorial to the victims of the Köpenick 'week of blood' (June 1933). At Bebelplatz, a gripping monument marks the site where on 10 May 1933, tens of thousands of books – by writers, dead and alive, whose work or identity the Nazis disapproved of – were burnt.

If you happen to walk past the Haus am Werderschen Markt, which once housed the Reichsbank, I recommend reading (on the spot or later, at home) pp. 263-264 of the German Jewish Source Book. In just a few paragraphs, you'll read how this one building has played an important, partly rather sinister, role in three different 'Germanies' between 1940 and today.

If the main purpose of your time in Berlin is learning and teaching more about the history of the Nazi Regime, you should reserve time to visit at least one of two former concentration camps. Both memorials offer excellent guided tours. The Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum tells the history of this 'model camp', which from 1938 onwards housed the administrative center for all the Nazi concentration camps, and where many notorious war criminals got part of their training and education. The Ravensbrück Concentration Camp Memorial Site is worth the journey, especially if you have a car or travel with a bus (about 90 minutes). The site is very well preserved, and the contrast between what happened there and the beautiful surroundings (including the lake) is astounding. I was particularly impressed with the permanent exhibition on the female guards and the choices they made, in one of the very nice buildings that used to house those same guards, many of whom would move on from Ravensbrück, to continue their 'careers' in camps like Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek.

During the Second World War, some 26 million men, women and children were used as forced laborers throughout the German Reich. Their story is told in the Nazi Forced Labor Documentation Center, at the historical site of a former forced labor camp in the middle of Berlin-Schöneweide. Three monuments for other specific, non-Jewish groups of victims can be found within walking distance of the central Holocaust monument: the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under National Socialism (inaugurated in 2008), the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Murdered under National Socialism (2012), and the Memorial and Information Site for the Victims of the National Socialist 'Euthanasia' Murders (2014). The three links given here provide more information about each memorial.

The Shoah and Jewish Life before the Holocaust

When learning about the persecution and murder of Jews in Berlin, Germany, or elsewhere, we should not forget that before "Death [became] a master from Germany"[1], there was a very rich Jewish life in Germany, in its capital and in the rest of Europe. One cannot talk about Jewish lives and Jewish history in the 20th century without mentioning the Holocaust, but one of the great things about Centropa and the stories it collected is that it informs about the life there was before the disaster, death and destruction. Berlin plays an important role in three Centropa biographies, those of Klara-Zenta Kanevskaya, Hillel Kempler, and Rosa Rosenstein.

In Centropa's German Jewish Sourcebook (pp. 268-281), you can find a walking tour passing through the Mitte neighborhood of Berlin, with many points of Jewish interest, several of which are mentioned in the three life stories that I mentioned in the previous paragraph. Starting in the Große Hamburger Strasse, you can see the former Jewish cemetery (with the gravestone of Moses Mendelssohn, though he is not buried there). Right next to it - at the historic site of the former Jewish old people's home - you will find a memorial dedicated to all the Jews deported to concentration camps from this site in 1943. Passing the Moses Mendelssohn High School and the Missing House, you can see a plaque at the house where Regina Jonas, the first female rabbi in history, lived before she and her mother were deported to Theresienstadt, and then to their deaths in Auschwitz. Not far from there, the Centrum Judaicum at the 19th century New Synagogue, in the Oranienburgerstraße, sheds light on the history of the Jewish community in Berlin. The Leo Baeck Haus is also nearby. Rabbi Leo Baeck was a professor here, and today the building is the headquarters of the Central Council of Jews in Germany and of the European Jewish Congress. In the Auguststraße, there used to be a school for Jewish girls and a Jewish orphanage. At the Koppenplatz, 'The Deserted Room', designed by Karl Biedermann, with a poem by Nelly Sachs, serves as a memorial for the many Jews who used to live in this part of the city. At Gipsstraße 3, there was a Jewish kindergarten, where Sala and Martin Kochmann (members of the Herbert Baum resistance group, see the section on resistance memorials) used to work. The communist authorities of East-Berlin honored the couple's memory with a plaque. From there you can go to the Hackesche Höfe (a beautiful oasis in the middle of the city), mentioned in Rosa Rosenstein's story, and walk to the Rosenstraße Memorial (see below).

In other parts of Berlin, other noteworthy Jewish sites can be found. At the Schönhauser Allee cemetery, you will find the graves of the painter Max Liebermann, composers Giacomo Meyerbeer, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and others. The Weißensee cemetery is the last resting place of the famous 19th century Jewish composer Louis Lewandowski (whose melodies are still sung in synagogues and Jewish homes all over the world); it also hosts an honorary grave for Herbert Baum and members of his resistance group (see below). Near the entrance of the cemetery one can find a Holocaust memorial with names of several concentration and extermination camps.

Three other sites should be mentioned here, because they play an important role in Jewish life in Berlin today. The Jewish Museum, one of Berlin's most popular tourist attractions, presents the history of Jews in Germany from the Middle Ages until today. The Jewish Community Center offers lots of cultural activities, including a yearly Jewish Film Festival. The Rykestraße Synagoge is Germany's largest synagogue. The building survived the war, was used for religious

1 freely quoted from Paul Celan's 'Todesfuge'

services by East-Berlin Jews, and restored and rededicated in 2005.

Quite a few memorials in Berlin bear witness to the persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazis and their helpers. One unique and very powerful monument is decentralized, i.e. it consists of 80 plaques put on lamp posts throughout the Bavarian Quarter, where Albert Einstein, Hannah Arendt and thousands of other Berlin Jews used to live. Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock, two Berlin artists, created the signs that form 'Places of Remembrance' (Orte des Erinnerns). Each of the signs consists of two sides. On one side, an anti-Jewish Nazi law and a date are mentioned, while the other side shows a picture symbolizing that law. For example, a drawing of names like Wolfgang, Roland, Renata in different handwritings illustrates a decree of 17 August 1938 stating that '[Jews] are obliged to assume by the 1st January 1939, a second, additional given-name as follows; for males, the given-name Israel and for females the given-name Sara. Two laws from June and July 1942 ("Eggs are no longer sold to Jews" and "No fresh milk for Jews") come with a drawing of a milk can. When you walk through the beautiful residential neighborhood, see the drawings and then read what is written on the backside, you come to feel almost physically the incremental changes – all for the worse – in the lives of Jews in Germany after the Nazis came to power in early 1933.

More than 50,000 Jews were deported from Berlin. Knowingly 15.122 to Theresienstadt (from where many would be sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau), and around 35,000 to other ghettos in German-occupied Central and Eastern Europe and to extermination camps and - with very few exceptions - murdered. The deportations took place from three railway stations, each of which now hosts a memorial. Personally, I find the large monument at Gleis 17 (Platform 17) in Berlin Grunewald the most impressive. At the platform, you'll see the details of each of the transports that left this station between October 1941 and March 1945: date, number of Jewish prisoners, destination. The other two railway stations are Memorial Site Freight Station Moabit and the Anhalter Bahnhof. In addition to the monument for the former old age home in the Große Hamburger Straße, from where Jews were taken to the Grunewald station, there is a monument to another such holding center in the Levetzowstraße.

Anhalter Bahnhof was not only the last station for Berlin Jews on their way to ghettos and camps in the East, it also played a role in the story of the Kindertransport. From here, after the Reichspogromnacht (November 1938) and until the beginning of World War II (September 1939), children and teenagers were brought by train to the Netherlands and Belgium, from where they were brought to safety in England. 10,000 children, most of them Jewish, were saved within the framework of this humanitarian endeavor. Centropa has a great website that covers this subject in detail, including stories of Kindertransport children and their families, and interviews with those children. A bronze sculpture, *Trains to Life – Trains to Death*, created by Frank Meisler (a Kindertransport child himself) and installed outside the Friedrichstraße train station, shows two groups of children, going in two different directions, as the title indicates: Kindertransport children who were saved, and children who were deported to their deaths in the ghettos and extermination camps.

Three memorial sites are a must for anybody who visits Berlin and is interested in the history of the Holocaust, and of World War II in general. At the House of the Wannsee Conference you can learn about the infamous conference of 20 January 1942, but it offers much more: tours in many different languages, workshops and seminars aimed at various professional and age groups, online education, and what is considered one of the best libraries on the Holocaust, the SS, National-Socialism etc. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, near the Brandenburger Gate, is overwhelming by

its sheer size and location. I usually find it a good place for reflection, also for students, and its permanent exhibition on the Shoah is one of the best such exhibitions that I have had the chance to visit in person. Finally, I would like to recommend the exhibition Wir waren Nachbarn (We Were Neighbors). This exhibition, located in a reading room at Berlin-Schöneberg City Hall (where J.F. Kennedy declared himself to be a Berliner), tells the story of 150 Jews from the Tempelhof and Schöneberg areas of the city who were forced into exile or murdered by the Nazis. You can find a summary of the exhibition in English here, and tours in English are given.

Soviet Memorials

Before I start writing about individual and organized forms of resistance against the Nazis, in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, I want to point out four sites that I think deserve to be mentioned and are worth a visit. The Soviet War Memorials in Treptow Park, Schönholzer Heide, and Tiergarten honor the Soviet soldiers who played such an important role in defeating Hitler and his Reich. The sites at Treptow Park and Schönholzer Heide include cemeteries where over 20,000 Soviet soldiers are buried. The art of the memorials is bombastic, Soviet-style, but walking among the large sculptures and watching the carvings on the walls never fails to move me. At the Museum Berlin Karlshorst, where the supreme commanders of the Wehrmacht signed Germany's unconditional surrender, you can learn more about various points of view on German-Soviet history in the 20th century. Representatives of the German Historical Museum in Berlin and the Central Museum of Armed Forces in Moscow make up the museum's executive board.

Resistance to the Nazis

The men and women, who chose – for whatever reasons and under whatever circumstances – to resist the Nazi regime, deserve a distinctive part in this overview. Some of the sites mentioned earlier – particularly the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück camps – are directly linked to the history of resistance in Nazi Germany. Many of the inmates in those and other camps were sent there because of their refusal to accept Nazi rule, and acts of defiance are known to have been committed in the camps.

The story that is told at the Museum Blindenwerkstatt Otto Weidt moves me every time I visit the modest museum, even though I have heard it at least a handful of times already. Otto Weidt (1883-1947) was an anarchist, who in his broom factory employed mostly Jews who were visually impaired or blind, trying to save them from deportation. With all that we know about the hardship of life for all Jews in Germany, we can not imagine how much more helpless those who were unable to see must have felt. Some of them were saved because of the efforts of Weidt and a small group of helpers, yet unfortunately, most of the workers were eventually deported and murdered.

From Otto Weidt's former workshop, it's a short walk to the memorial for the women of the Rosenstraße protest, which was triggered by what became known as the 'factory action' in February-March 1943. Non-Jewish wives protested against the imprisonment of their Jewish husbands by gathering in front of the building of the former Welfare Office of the Jewish community and loudly demanding the release of the prisoners. Threats from the Gestapo and SS failed to intimidate the protesters in Rosenstraße. After a week, the

Gestapo finally began to release several hundred prisoners. Those released from Rosenstrasse had to report to the employment office and were forced to do forced labor. Despite the protests, the majority of the arrested Jews did not escape deportation to concentration and extermination camps. The protest in Rosenstraße marks one of the few public protests against the deportation of Jews in Nazi Germany.

Two monuments and a plaque remind us of the heroic deeds of four individuals, and of the members of one of those individuals' resistance groups. One of the resistance stories that has always fascinated me in particular is that of Elise (1903-1943) and Otto (1897-1943) Hampel, which inspired Hans Fallada to write his *Jeder stirbt für sich allein* (*Every Man Dies Alone*, also published under the title *Alone in Berlin*). After Elise's brother, a soldier, was killed in France, the couple wrote hundreds of postcards with calls to resist and to bring down the Nazi regime. They left the cards in mailboxes, stairwells and elsewhere. After more than a year of their naive yet audacious acts of defiance, the two were arrested, sentenced to death and executed at Plötzensee prison (see below). A small plaque in their memory can be found at the site of their former residence, at Amsterdamer Straße 10.

A five minutes' walk from the Rosenstraße monument, next to the Lustgarten and the Museuminsel, there is a simple stone monument for the group around Herbert Baum (1912-1942). This group, active from 1936, was mostly made up of young communists but also included left wing Zionists.. It cooperated with non-Jewish opposition groups and put up intellectual and political resistance: illegal publications, political training, educational activities, and helping Jews who were about to be deported. On 18 May 1942, group members were caught in a largely unsuccessful attempt to set fire to the anti-communist and anti-Semitic exhibition 'The Soviet Paradise' at the Lustgarten. Herbert himself was tortured to death, his wife Marianne and other members were executed at Plötzensee Prison. The monument was commissioned by the East Berlin authorities in 1981, which explains why the fact that Herbert and most of his group members were Jewish was omitted: "Not forgotten / the brave deeds and the / steadfastness of the / antifascist / resistance group led by / the young communist / Herbert Baum".

In the Wilhelmstraße, close to the Holocaust memorial, the courageous attempt by Georg Elser (1903-1945) to kill Hitler in Munich in 1939 is commemorated with an inconspicuous sculpture. Elser is also honored with a small exhibition of his own at the German Resistance Memorial Center. There, at the Bendler Block, the former headquarters of the high command where Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg and three fellow officers were executed on 20 July 1944, you find a permanent exhibition on the various individuals and groups in Germany that offered resistance to the Nazi government, plus often very interesting temporary exhibitions. At the same courtyard, in the same block, you can visit the Stille Helden Memorial Center, which honors the people who helped persecuted Jews in Nazi Germany, and the Aktives Museum – Fascism and Resistance in Berlin, which defines itself as a 'museum without a museum', "an open forum and workshop for anyone interested in dealing with the history of Nazism, the social conditions which fostered it and the repercussions it continues to have today [...] (through) exhibitions, publications, talks and commemorative events."

Last but not least, I want to recommend visiting two prisons, where thousands of German and foreign opponents of National-Socialism were 'executed', and where many more were imprisoned under particularly harsh conditions. First of all, the Plötzensee Prison, where around 2,800 men and women were murdered by hanging or guillotine, after having been sentenced to death for various acts of resistance. Among these were members of the Rote Kapelle, the Baum Gruppe, and officers involved in the

20 July 1944 plot against Hitler. The memorial site is not the most accessible site with public transport, but it's worth the effort. When I visited the site with my colleague Daphna and our 12th grade students (with whom I had done a project on German resistance against the Nazis), we conducted a short ceremony. I presented the stories of three victims who found their death at Plötzensee, each of them representing a different form of resistance. Parts of the website of the memorial are in English, including a selection of biographies of men and women murdered there, but the most interesting part ('The Dead of Plötzensee', a list with hundreds of biographies of victims, including primary documents related to their arrest, imprisonment etc.) is available only in German. Another prison and execution site can be found at the Memorial Site Correctional Center Brandenburg-Görden, where 2,743 prisoners were 'executed', in a much shorter period than at Plötzensee (1940-1945, instead of 1933-1945). Interestingly enough, (parts of) both prisons are still in use as prisons today.

Final Thoughts

The overview that I have given here can form a good starting point if you are planning to visit Berlin and are interested in the history of Nazi Germany. There is hardly any better way to deepen your own and your students' knowledge of and interest in history than to see, feel and walk the sites where it all happened. However, my list is far from exhaustive. For example, I haven't mentioned the Stolpersteine, a decentralized remembrance project, like the monument in the Bavarian Quarter. On the website Stolpersteine in Berlin you can find the location of 'stumbling stones' throughout the different parts of the city, and basic information about the victim that each stone helps us remember. That is one of the most important things that all these memorials do: they help us remember – and thereby – honor the victims of the Nazis and their many helpers, as well as the few brave men and women who chose to resist. To quote Elie Wiesel once again, from his preface to the new translation (2012) of *Night*: "... in the end, it is all about memory."

Past the Gates of Ravensbrück

*by **Zsuzsanna & Anna Ébner***

Introduction

The Holocaust stands as one of the most devastating and detrimental chapters in human history. A chapter that some might find challenging or even burdensome to read. A chapter that can be too draining to talk about. A chapter that some survivors don't even want to think about. Yet, it is a chapter that we must teach about. By teaching about the Shoah, not only can we preserve the memory of those who suffered but we can also guide the future generations to open the next chapters with an open heart and mind and an affirmed commitment to respecting human rights and democratic values. They would write the chapters to come knowing what hatred, unchecked power and intolerance can lead to.

Memorial sites – such as Ravensbrück – offer a unique opportunity for educators to engage their students with history and help them deepen their understanding of the Holocaust. This article aims to give a brief overview of the camp and guide educators on how to integrate Ravensbrück into their curriculum, what topics to cover, how to prepare a visit, and use the memorial site as a powerful learning tool. The included photos – that we took during our visit to the camp – are intended to help our readers gain a better understanding of the site while also making the article more engaging and authentic.

Brief overview of the camp

The Ravensbrück Concentration Camp – built close to the small town of Fürstenberg/Havel in 1939 – was the largest concentration camp for women in the German Reich. Between 1939 and 1945 around 130.000 women, 20.000 men and 1.000 young women from over 40 countries were registered as prisoners. Amongst them Jews, Roma, political prisoners, resistance members and those who were labeled "undesirable" by the Nazi regime. The camp was notorious for its harsh conditions, medical experiments and forced labor. It also served as a training facility for female guard staff for all concentration camps. The camp was liberated by the Red Army in April 1945 and the land was used for military purposes until 1994.

The Ravensbrück Memorial Site, opened in 1959, includes extensive parts of the concentration camp complex, and nowadays it is also a place of remembrance and a home to educational projects and research. The memorial site has been part of the Brandenburg Memorial Foundation since 1993.

Topics to address

When it comes to visiting or teaching about Ravensbrück, it's essential to address a great variety of topics; not only to provide a comprehensive understanding of the camp's history, but also to create an impactful learning experience about its broader implications on human rights, resilience, social justice and the consequences of hatred and prejudice. Please, find a guide to the key themes to cover down below:

- Women in the Holocaust: Ravensbrück was unique in a sense that it was a concentration camp primarily for women, therefore students can explore the specific ways the female prisoners lived, suffered and resisted. Besides women as prisoners, students can also focus on women as guards, explore their brutality and how gender influenced their respective experiences.
- Medical experiments: Ravensbrück was notorious for its inhumane medical experiments. Regarding this, students can discuss the following aspects: access to healthcare as a basic human right, medical ethics, being the "rabbits" to bone-grafting experiments and newly developed drugs, and the aftermath: long-term consequences for the victims and their attempt to hold these medical professionals accountable.
- Perpetrators and bystanders: In addition to medical experiments, Ravensbrück's prisoners were also subjected to harsh forced labor. Understanding the motivations and actions of those who perpetrated or let these atrocities happen is essential. This topic encompasses analyzing not only the role of the guards, but also the role of the local population and, more broadly, that of the entire society. As for the locals, they saw the exhausted prisoners marching to the factories, yet later many of them stated that they were unaware of what was going on in the camp. The local children were even told that what they noticed was just a bakery, when in reality that was the camp's gas chamber claiming the lives of many...
- Art: The memorial offers art installations and exhibits that educators can use to talk about how art serves as a medium for both remembering and interpreting history. Artwork created by former prisoners can also be incorporated into the curriculum. Eliane Jeannin-Garreau created sketches and drawings on slips of paper that she smuggled into her block. Edith Kiss never spoke about

what had happened to her in Ravensbrück, however she created an album titled "Deportation" and she used her 30 paintings to help her cope with the horrors of the camp. Based on their work, the multifaceted nature and purpose of art – form of resistance, way of documenting what was happening, coping mechanism, etc. – can be discussed.

- Aftermath and memory: The camp's history didn't end with its liberation: the crimes committed here were parts of the Nuremberg Trials and today the place serves as a memorial site. Students can explore how the survivors dealt with their trauma and rebuilt their lives. They can also focus on the topic of social justice and war crimes. Finally, they can reflect on the importance of remembrance and the different ways countries around the world try to ensure that something like this could never happen again. It is also worth reflecting on the outcome of the trials and the fact that most of the former guards of Ravensbrück were not held accountable for their crimes.

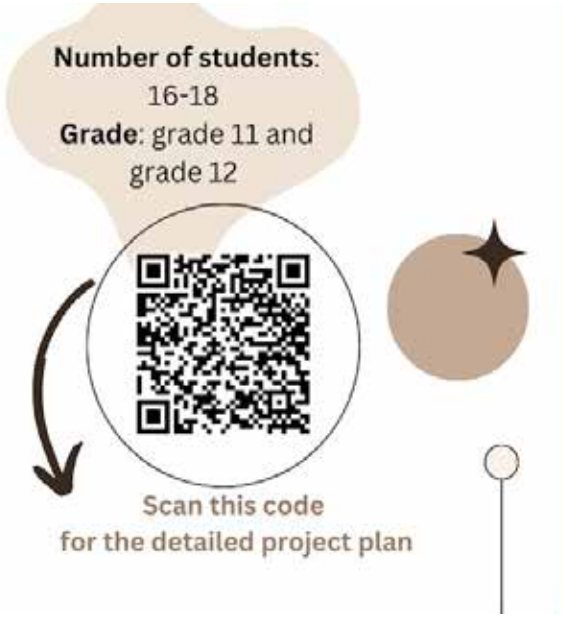
Our project plan

Our project plan titled "Past the gates: The Women of Ravensbrück" was designed specifically for this year's Centropa Summer Academy and was presented during its Marketplace of Ideas section in Berlin. The project plan consists of three lessons each focusing on different aspects: an in-depth exploration of the camp, daily life, and students creating a virtual exhibition.

During this immersive and engaging project, students embark on an interdisciplinary journey to investigate the history and legacy of Ravensbrück. Within the scope of these three lessons, not only do they gain a comprehensive understanding of the camp, but they also work with a great variety of sources: survival testimonies, photographs, articles, camp documents and drawings. Through the lives of

Mariann Szamosi, Imréné Herczog, Irma Grese and Yevgenia Lasarevna Klemm students discuss ethical dilemmas, explore different perspectives and cooperate to create a virtual exhibition on topics such as medical experiments, daily struggles, brutality of the guards and resistance. This project aims to amplify the unheard voices of the prisoners, develop critical research skills and foster reflective thinking and empathy.

Above you can find a brochure presenting the outline of each lesson and to the right a QR code that leads you to the detailed project plan along with its worksheets, photos, maps and sources.



Things to do on site

Preparation is crucial when it comes to visiting any memorial place, but especially the ones that might be emotionally and mentally difficult for our students to experience. Visiting a place somehow connected to the Holocaust means that the past is made tangible for our students in a much more powerful way than what they are used to by coursebooks, movies or in-classroom lessons. We must be mindful of that. (More about this under the next subheading.)

What happens when you visit the Ravensbrück Memorial Site might vary depending on the age of your students, their understanding of the broader events of the Holocaust, their prior knowledge regarding the camp, how much time you have to explore the site, what you as an educator would like to focus on, etc. If you choose educational programs that last over a period of several days, you can stay on site at the Youth Hostel. We would like to highlight that doing a tour remotely is also an option: building on the project that we briefly introduced above and relying on the official website of the memorial site, the rich resources of the Centropa archive and the impressive collection of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, students can even explore Ravensbrück from afar.

The memorial site has a lot to offer from conventional guided tours, project days, one- and multi-day seminars, exhibitions, workshops to special events such as the Ravensbrück European Summer School. The official website gives a detailed description of all the programs, tours, and projects. It is also worth noting that they work with survivors, who also actively participate in some of their educational projects. Touching on all of these amazing programs would go beyond the scope of this article, therefore only a handful of them and a few practical ideas will be detailed below.

- Guide: Although it is possible to get an audio guide at the Visitor Center, opting for the 2-hour overview tour with an actual guide is warmly recommended. The guides are very knowledgeable and give interactive tours during which they help the students engage deeply with the site, and they also offer in-depth thematic tours.
- Personal stories: Students explore the memorial site on their own for a while and while doing that, they read excerpts from Centropa interviews. By reading the

testimonies of those who were once prisoners of Ravensbrück, they can get a more complex understanding of the camp and see how the historical events impacted the lives of the survivors. Later, they can share what stood out for them or reflect on a quote from the interviews that really resonated with them.

- Reflective activities: Journaling or having group discussions can be very helpful for students to process what they experience in real time. Possible questions to reflect on: What specific exhibition, location stood out for you? What kind of thoughts, emotions did it evoke? What do you take away from this visit?
- Exploration activities: Students in small groups explore the site and take pictures of things they find interesting, then they upload the photos to an online gallery and do research on the internet to find out more. The whole group comes together to have a look at the online gallery, during which students discuss their photos. This is where clarifications, additional pieces of information by the educator might be necessary. This activity can revolve around different themes: for example, we can narrow it down to sculptures and memorial plaquettes, or even drawings and illustrations.
- Taking time to breathe and think: You might want to consider allocating some time for your students to just sit with their emotions and thoughts. Visiting a memorial site that once was a concentration camp is emotionally and mentally overwhelming, so having some minutes to try to digest what they have just seen can be very helpful. It also takes a bit of time coming to terms with the contrast between the beauty of the lake, the amazing trees and the horrors of camp...
- Art: At the end of the visit, when your group is sitting around the wooden desks in front of the Youth Hostel, as a reflective task, perhaps you would like to place some cards on the table. These cards can depict artwork created by the prisoners of the camp and you could consider asking your students to pick one card that they feel connected to. You can purchase cards featuring the drawings and paintings of Edit Kiss and Eliane Jeannin-Garreau at the bookstore, or you can simply print some pictures at home. The activity continues as follows: in small groups, students reflect on their feelings and explain why they chose these cards, how they interpret them, etc.
- The cell building: Originally, the two-storey building was the camp's prison, nowadays the upper floor holds national memorial rooms, whereas the lower floor is dedicated to prisoner groups. Students working in small groups might explore 1-2 national memorial rooms, take pictures, notes and later, they will be encouraged to report on their findings. Possible aspects to cover: displayed objects, different forms of art, personal belongings of the prisoners, provided background information.
- The Führerhaus: The villas of the SS officers and their families were right adjacent to the prisoner compound. What is so striking about it is that we can still find traces of them living there and explore their actions and motives at the same time. Knowing that they lived there with their families, happily, whereas others were suffering and dying in the compound on their orders just a few meters away is a thought-provoking concept to discuss.
- In the SS-Auxiliary: This permanent exhibition is on display in one of the former female guards' houses and focuses

on the guards' background, their career opportunities, their motives and take on power. Here, students could for example fill in a thematic worksheet that addresses not just the previously mentioned aspects, but also touches on the aftermath and what life was like for them after the liberation of the camp.

- Connecting to our project: If you follow our project plan with your students, you can absolutely add new posters that reflect your visit to Ravensbrück. Having posters dedicated to your students' reflections and photos taken during the visit would be a nice way to conclude this project.

Preparing a visit

We firmly believe that preparing students before visiting Ravensbrück is crucial to ensure they have both the historical context and the emotional readiness needed to engage meaningfully with the site and its tours. Here is a list of pre-visit activities that we kindly recommend to our fellow colleagues:

- Introductory lessons: It is essential to teach students about the Holocaust, its key events, and the establishment of the concentration camps with special attention dedicated to Ravensbrück. Without these introductory lessons, students wouldn't have the historical background that is needed for visits like this one. Teachers are more than welcome to use our entire project plan or just parts of it to teach about Ravensbrück if they find it fitting to the needs of their students.
- Themes and topics: There are many topics that could be discussed before visiting the camp. In this article alone, you could have read about five of them. We highly recommend discussing how gender influenced the experiences of the prisoners, why Ravensbrück was a unique camp for women, and, finally, why places such as this camp are preserved as memorial sites.
- Emotional Impact: Being emotionally prepared for a visit like this is just as important as knowing its historical context. Therefore, we respectfully advise our fellow educators to address the difficult and complex emotions that their students are likely to encounter during the visit, emphasizing that it is normal to feel sadness, confusion and even anger. We also recommend educators to inquire in advance whether any of their students are personally impacted by the Holocaust through their ancestors or family friends, as such trips can be particularly overwhelming for them. It is crucial to pay extra attention to their needs during the visit.
- Safe space: Besides preparing the students for the emotional impact of the camp, it is also important to create a safe space for them, where they are encouraged to express their concerns and worries that they might have about the upcoming visit. It is also advised to agree on a safety sign that students can signal to their educators when they feel overwhelmed in the camp indicating that they need assistance or just a minute or two alone to process what they are going through. Our fellow colleagues might want to consider bringing the school's psychologist on this visit, ensuring that professional support is available to students if needed.
- Respectful behavior: It is important to emphasize that Ravensbrück is a memorial

site and a place of remembrance, therefore students are expected to behave respectfully.

- Pre-assigned research projects: Teachers can ask their students to research certain aspects of the camp or read survivor testimonies with the intention of helping them connect with the site on a personal level.

After exploring Ravensbrück, educators are encouraged to engage their students in activities that help them process their experiences and reflect on the lessons that take away from the visit. Here is a list of post-visit activities:

- Group discussion: Creating a safe space for the students to share their thoughts, emotions, impressions and questions is something we would like to highlight again, since if our students feel safe, they open up and truly elaborate on how the visit impacted them and shaped their perspective on certain topics.
- Journaling: As a variation of the above-mentioned group discussion, teachers can encourage their students to write about their feelings, thoughts, or what they believe is the most important lesson from the visit.
- Link to contemporary issues: While it is crucial to stress that the Holocaust was unprecedented and not to compare it to other genocides or atrocities, we believe that examining the horrors of Ravensbrück can help draw our students' attention to contemporary examples of prejudice, discrimination and human rights abuses. After teaching and / or visiting the camp, educators might want to ask their students to identify such issues either in their local communities or on a global scale and consider how they could raise awareness and tackle these problems. This connection to contemporary issues allows civic responsibility to take center stage in the classroom.
- Creative projects: Creative projects provide powerful avenues for processing emotions, feelings and thoughts. Therefore, teachers may want to consider supporting their students in creating various types of creative works – such as drawings, paintings, videos, poems, short stories, or even songwriting – that are inspired by their visit.
- Outreach and community awareness: If the students are open to it, they might want to create presentations, social media posts, or articles for the school's newspaper to share their experiences, raise awareness of the camp and the importance of Holocaust remembrance.
- Further readings and movies: It can happen that the students get interested in the camp to the point where they ask for further books and/or movies. In this case, teachers can provide a list of books, documentaries, or films that are related to Ravensbrück and the Holocaust. Teachers can also consider organizing film screenings or hosting book clubs.

Conclusion

We believe that teaching about Ravensbrück offers an opportunity to address a great variety of complex historical and ethical topics. By combining historical facts and visits to the camp with the personal stories of the former prisoners, teachers can foster a deeper understanding of the Holocaust and emphasize the crucial significance of combating hatred and injustice in all its forms.

Centropa's Border Jumping Project: Connecting Students Through Pastimes Then and Now

by ***David Castillo***

It has been said that, "In order to understand the tragedy of the Holocaust, we must first understand what we lost." This can be challenging for an 8th grade English Language Arts teacher like me who teaches a predominantly Hispanic community in the greater Los Angeles area. In fact, when I first introduce this subject matter to my students, I begin with the following question: What do you know about Jews? Sadly, most remain silent, blank stares and all. Only a few make reference to the Holocaust and/or reference Anne Frank. However, I'll be damned if my students enter 9th grade believing that–as absurd as it sounds–the purpose of Jews was to die.

Even well before immersing themselves in the horrors of the Holocaust, my students become familiar with vocabulary associated with Jewish life; terms like, Sabbat, synagogue, Purim, menorah, bar mitzvah, kippah, Passover, and Torah, to name a few. Students are also exposed to examples of antisemitism originating from the times of Christ to recent cases that made news headlines. And then, we get to "the bread and butter" of the unit: The Border Jumping Project (BJP), a project that clearly reflects one of Centropa's core beliefs that we don't believe in borders.

I first heard of this amazing opportunity for my students in 2019 while attending Centropa's Summer Academy (CSA) in Berlin. The program consisted of hearing from authors, representatives of the Stolpersteine Project, experts in the field of prewar and post war Jewish studies, and visits to important sites such as the House of the Wannsee Conference, the Topography of Terror, and the Jewish Museum Berlin. The eight days I spent in Berlin inspired me to complete my first BJP with Croatian Educator Andrea Sertic of Slovanski Brod. Students did such an impressive job with the project, that I was once again invited to Berlin in 2021 (which was postponed to 2022 due to Covid-19), but this time I wasn't merely a student; I was asked to serve as a BJP elective coordinator, a clear testament of yet another one of Centropa's core beliefs that no one teaches a teacher better than another teacher.

I've been fortunate to have completed a BJP with students for four consecutive years now. One year after working with Croatian students from Matija Mesic Gymnasium, my students collaborated with the students of Israeli teacher Amikam Peled of Har Tuv High school located in Kibbutz Tzor'a. The following year, my students completed a BJP with a new group of students from the same school under the supervision of teacher Nomi Bass. Finally, last year brought my students in touch with the pupils of Anke Shimmer of Dortmund, Germany.

Student-created Border Jumping Project Slide featuring native Austrians Lilli Tauber of Wiener Neustadt, and Max Uri of Vienna.

Making pastimes and leisure activities the focus of the BJP made it easy for students to become vested in the projects as they soon realize that their own pastimes are comparable to those of Jews almost 100 years ago. And this connection to the "bigger picture" is taken a step further when students realize that they share similar pastimes with their project partner who is from a different culture and timezone.

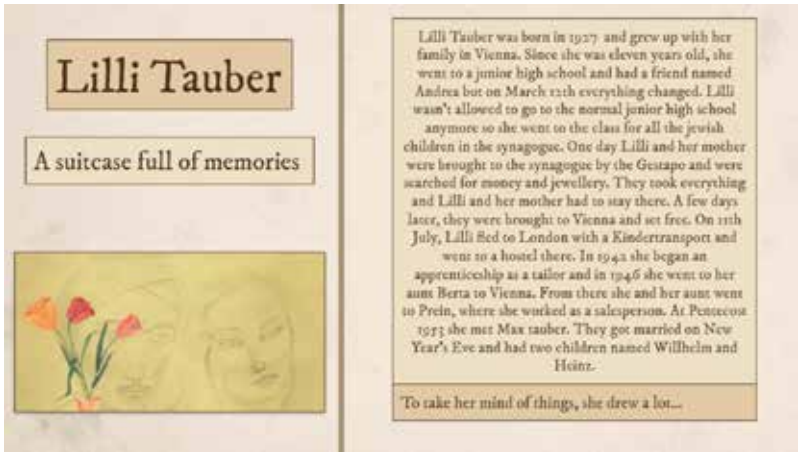
The BJP consists of five goals/outcomes for students: 1) to focus on the pastimes of featured Centropa biographies; 2) to obtain a broader perspective about Jewish life in various European countries prior to, during and after The Holocaust; 3) to make a connection to the favorite leisure activities of Jewish interviewees; 4) to elaborate on their own pastimes to learn more about one another; and 5) to raise an awareness for respecting the culture, traditions, and religion of their partner while promoting solidarity, tolerance, and empathy.

This past year, students used 6 Centropa films to incorporate into their project while focusing on the pastimes they could connect with. The films included A Suitcase Full of Memories (featuring the pastimes of art, photography, and letter writing in the life of Lilli Tauber); The Best Stories of My Life (with Herbert Lewin and the pastimes of listening to music and attending concerts); Looking For Frieda, Finding Frieda (showcasing Max Uri and the pastime of enjoying time with friends); The Past

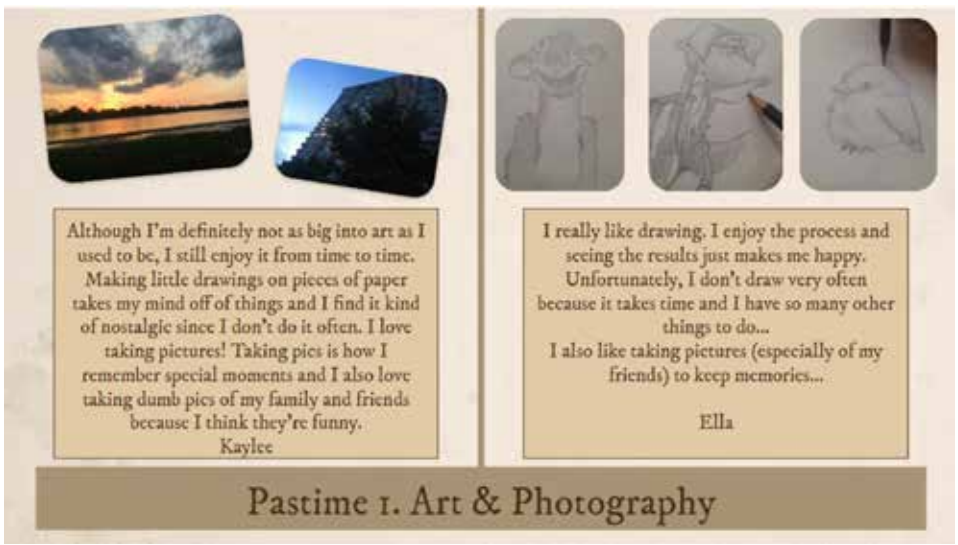
is Another Country (highlighting Leo Luster and the pastime of watching films); Return to Rivne (staring cousins Shelly Weiner and Raya Kizhnerman and the pastime of arts and crafts); and, finally, Zahor - Remember (featuring Heinz and Manfred Mayer and the pastime of playing sports).

Students select two to three Centropa films to include as part of their Google Slides project, but the inclusion of Jewish learning only takes up about 40% of the project. During the 2019 Centropa Summer Academy, founder Ed Serotta said that the BJP must be about the students first and foremost...not about the featured Jews, not about The Holocaust, and not about Centropa itself. I took that to heart, and that is why the BJP I created prioritizes the students and their families, pets, music, video games, sports, religion, favorite customs, unique foods, etc. The result makes for an organic learning process in which students who have absolutely no connection to Jewry realize the story of a resilient people who have flourished stronger than ever after 1945.

Four years after organizing my first BJP, I am excited to soon work with 2022 CSA alumni Olha Taratula of Sambir, Ukraine, to continue this learning tradition that really is the highlight of my teaching career. Centropa has provided me with the tools and means to connect students to the larger world around them, which in turn allows students to realize that the world isn't as big as they thought once they discover that there's a Croatian, Israeli, German, or Ukrainian teenager who has more in common with them than they think.



Student-produced Border Jumping Project slide summarizing the story of Kindertransport survivor Lilli Tauber.



Border Jumping Project Slide connecting with Lilli Tauber's A Suitcase Full of Memories featuring the pastimes of art and photography by students Kaylee of El Monte, California, and Ella of Dortmund, Germany.


Tagesdurchlaßschein
Rutar Karl 4v5/2. B IV
bis 19.4.1943 zwecks Arbeiten als Zimmermann beim Bau
en die Stadtgrenze bis 20 Uhr zu überschreiten.
dt.am 16.3.1943.
Der Lagerkommandant:
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UCH DASSELBE VON