

PREPARING HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAYS: Suggestions for Educators



January 2006

Introduction

These guidelines on preparing Holocaust memorial days have been developed for educators teaching high-school age students in the participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), highlighting suggestions on how to plan commemoration activities connected with annual Holocaust Remembrance Days.

The OSCE is the largest pan-European regional security organization with 55 participating States from North America, Europe, Central Asia and Caucasus. The OSCE **Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights** (ODIHR) is one of several institutions established to promote and support for the implementation of commitments in the field of human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and the rule of law. In reference to the presence of anti-Semitism and its resurgence in parts of the OSCE region in recent years, the OSCE has reaffirmed the responsibility of participating States for promoting tolerance and non-discrimination, combating anti-Semitism and strengthening their activities in the area of Holocaust education. Since 2003, several OSCE conferences on anti-Semitism and the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination have developed new and detailed commitments in these areas.

In follow up to the OSCE Conference on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance in Cordoba, Spain in June 2005, experts representing twelve participating States convened at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, Israel, to formulate these guidelines. The expert meeting was generously funded by the Asper International Holocaust Studies Program, supported by the Asper Foundation, Winnipeg, Canada, and the guidelines were developed with the support of the Government of Germany.

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, was established in 1953 by an act of the Israeli parliament. The name Yad Vashem originates from the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 56, Verse 5, "And to them will I give my house and within my walls a memorial and a name (a "yad vashem")... that shall not be cut off." Located in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem has been entrusted with documenting the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust period, preserving the memory and story of each of the six million victims, and imparting the legacy of the Holocaust for generations to come through its vast archives, extensive library, research institute, international school and new museums.

Overview of guidelines

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Pedagogical guidelines on approaches in Holocaust education in general may be consulted from the materials available on the websites listed at the end of this document.

I. Holocaust Memorial Days in an International Context

“The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. ‘Holocaust’ is a word of Greek origin meaning ‘sacrifice by fire.’ The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were ‘racially superior’ and that Jews, were deemed ‘life unworthy of life.’ During the Holocaust, the Nazis also targeted other groups because of their perceived ‘racial inferiority’: Roma/Sinti (Gypsies), the handicapped, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles , Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*

In January 2000, 46 governments, including 41 OSCE participating States, signed the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, noting that “The Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization. The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning. After [more than] half a century, it remains an event close enough in time that survivors can still bear witness to the horrors that engulfed the Jewish people. The terrible suffering of the many millions of other victims of the Nazis has left an indelible scar across Europe as well. [...] We share a commitment to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to honor those who stood against it. We encourage appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance, including an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance, in our countries.”

Holocaust memorial days are a relatively new phenomenon in some countries, whereas they are long standing traditions in others. Governments have initiated and organized official ceremonies and special parliamentary sessions marking Holocaust Memorial Day that have been widely covered by the local, national and international media.



Warsaw, Poland, postwar, Memorial March for the Victims of the Holocaust. (Yad Vashem)

In October 2002, the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe member states passed a resolution that a “Day of Remembrance” should be instituted in all schools in their respective countries to commemorate the Holocaust.¹ In addition, during its sixtieth general assembly plenary meeting in November 2005, the United Nations decided to make 27 January an international day of commemoration to honour the victims of the Holocaust, and urged member states to develop educational programmes to impart the memory of this tragedy to future generations.²



Laying a wreath at the Wall of Death in the courtyard of Block 11 at Auschwitz I-Stammlager. Youth delegations and the Ministers of Education of 48 State Parties to the European Cultural Convention, participants of the international seminar "Teaching Remembrance Through Cultural Heritage", Cracow and Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, 4-6 May 2005. (ICEAH, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)

In recent years, the OSCE has placed an emphasis on promoting Holocaust remembrance and combating contemporary anti-Semitism. OSCE participating States committed themselves to the remembrance of the Holocaust with the Decision that was taken at the end of a conference on anti-Semitism in April 2004 in Berlin.

Thirty-one out of 55 OSCE participating States have established a Holocaust memorial day.³ Albania, Belgium, Croatia, The Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have legislated that each year on 27 January (the day in which Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated), ceremonies and other special events will be held to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust.

For example, in the United Kingdom, Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January is marked by a national event that is attended by public figures, Holocaust survivors and other dignitaries. Regional commemorative events have also been held in several cities across the country. Community events are also encouraged, with hundreds of small groups such as churches, amnesty groups, schools, universities, and town councils holding local events for the public and their own communities. The British Home Office provides funding as well as a resource pack to assist groups in organizing such events. In addition, the British Department of Education and Skills produces online and printed materials for Holocaust Memorial Day.

¹ For more information on this decision and on other related issues pertaining to Holocaust remembrance throughout Europe, see: <http://www.coe.int>.

² For more information see: <http://www.un.org>.

³ A table of officially instituted Holocaust memorial days across the OSCE region can be found in Appendix II.

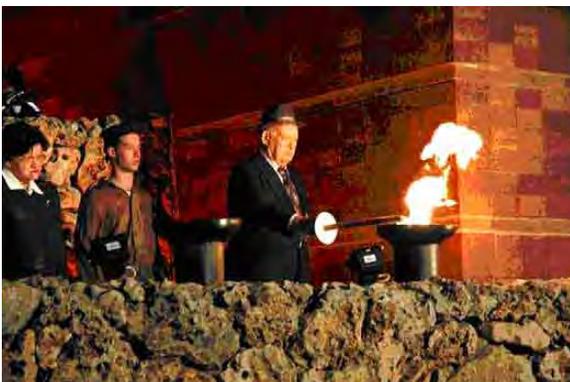
On 27 January 2005, the Central Ukrainian Holocaust Foundation "Tkuma" organized a project known as "Marathon of Memory", aimed at increasing Holocaust consciousness in dozens of Ukrainian towns and cities. Events included an award ceremony for students who took part in a competition about the Holocaust; "Marches of the Living" to Holocaust-related authentic sites; roundtables with students and well-known public figures; and a press conference with representatives of international and local media in conjunction with the 60th anniversary commemoration ceremonies of the liberation of Auschwitz–Birkenau. In Odessa, the commemoration featured a combination of literary and artistic images and stories by Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate. State and local officials throughout the country participated in these events.



Performance by Zaporozhye JCC dance group as part of Marathon of Memory project, Ukraine 2005, Tkuma (Central Ukrainian Holocaust Foundation)

Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have established Holocaust memorial days that relate to historical events that took place within their respective countries during the Holocaust period. For example, Hungary commemorates 16 April, the date that the first ghetto was created in Munkacs, whereas Lithuania has chosen 23 September in memory of the murder of the remaining Jewish population in the Vilnius ghetto in 1943.

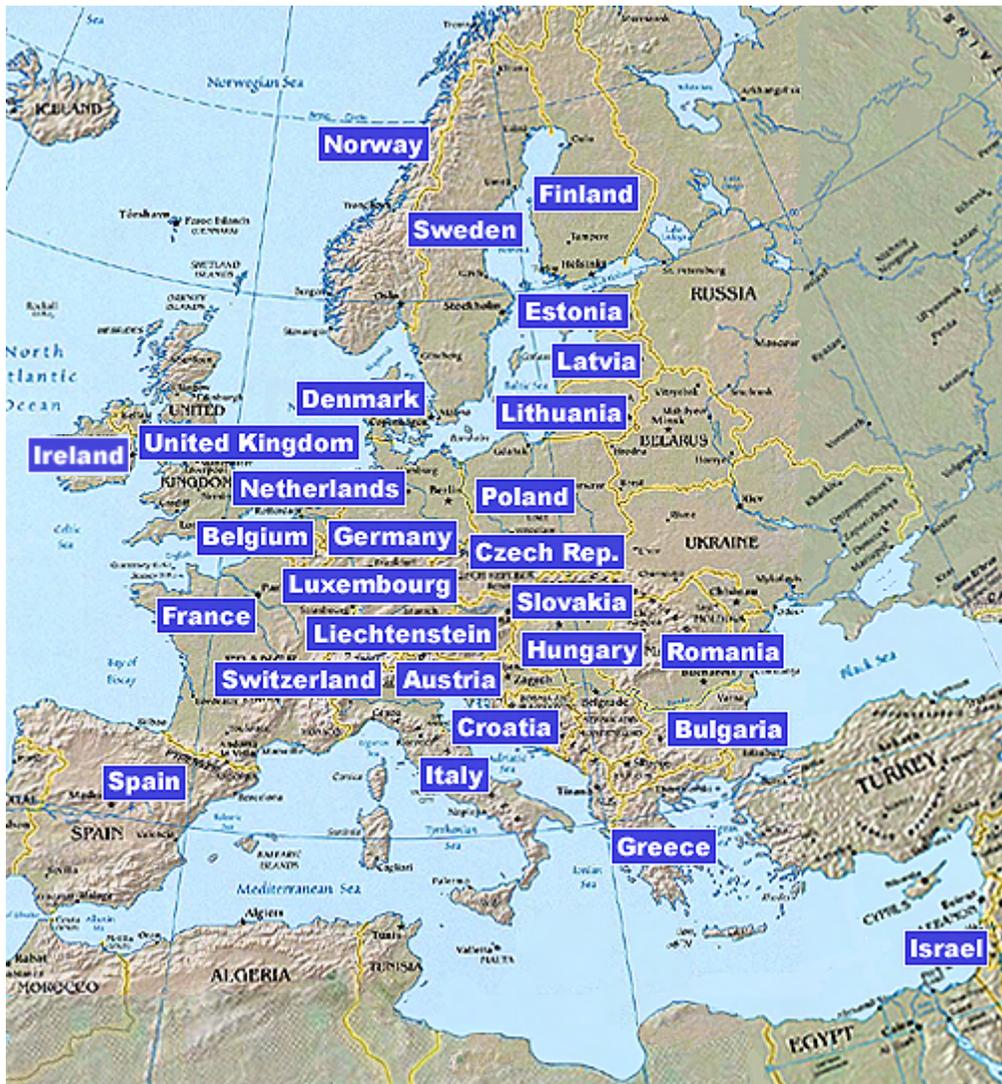
Canada and the United States observe dates relating to Yom HaShoah. *Yom HaShoah Ve-Hagevurah* (Hebrew) literally means the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, beginning at sunset on the 27th of the month of Nisan of the Hebrew calendar. Yom HaShoah, marking the beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1943, was established in law by the Israeli government in 1951. A two-minute siren is sounded throughout the entire country in memory of the victims, and places of entertainment, such as theatres, dance halls, restaurants and cafes, are closed on this day. It has become a day commemorated by Jewish communities and individuals worldwide.



Yerakmiyel Felzenshteyn lights a torch during the ceremony marking Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, 4 May 2005, Yad Vashem.

Various communities have long standing traditions of commemorating events of the Holocaust and/or the Second World War. A Holocaust memorial day should not ignore or replace well-established rituals of remembrance, but rather should deepen their meaning and importance within these communities.

Educators who live in countries without official Holocaust remembrance days may wish to embark on a research project with their students on the Holocaust, especially in relation to what happened in their countries at that time.



Click on the country names for details of Holocaust remembrance activities. This interactive map is also available at <http://www1.yadvashem.org/education/ceremonies/liberation/map/map.html>. (Yad Vashem)

II. Methodological Principles

Commemorative events cannot and should not come in place of studying about what happened in the past. After all, a comprehensive study of a subject – which involves an active learning process within the framework of the class curriculum – and the commemoration of historical events from year to year are quite different in character. Rituals of remembrance, such as ceremonies with musical vignettes, readings of texts and names of victims, are limited in scope even when carried out on an annual basis.

Activities that focus on the stories of real people, whose names or faces have been identified (for example, former Jewish inhabitants of a town or neighbourhood, former teachers or students of a school) or can be discovered through research, are recommended.

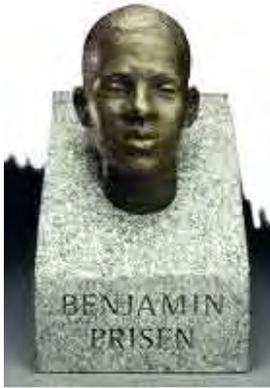


Placing an emphasis on the faces, names and daily lives of Holocaust victims restores dignity to all those who were murdered. By presenting victims as human beings from long-established communities, rather than as statistics in gas chambers and mass graves, teachers can convey the multicultural tapestry of Jewish life in Europe between the two wars.

The Hall of Names, part of the New Holocaust History Museum at Yad Vashem. In fulfilling its mandate to memorialize the legacy of each individual Jew who died at the hands of the National Socialists and their collaborators, Yad Vashem has been collecting "Pages of Testimony" since the mid-1950s. Submitted by survivors, relatives or friends of the victims, Pages of Testimony are preserved as lasting memorials in the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem, Jerusalem. (Ardon Bar Hama, Yad Vashem)

Teachers should encourage their students to demonstrate personal initiative and responsibility in co-ordinating age-appropriate and interdisciplinary commemorative activities including music, drama, literature, history, theology, philosophy and other disciplines. The organization of plays, readings of victims' names and texts such as diaries, student-initiated visits to local authentic sites, exhibitions, and other programmes are highly encouraged.

Holocaust memorial days can also create an opportunity for the entire school community to gather together for a meaningful educational experience. School administrators, teachers and students may also want to address and reflect on incidents of xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism in their learning environments over the past year on this specific day.



In Norway, on 27 January, the annual Benjamin Prize, named after fifteen-year-old Benjamin Hermansen, who was the victim of a racially motivated murder by neo-Nazis in 2001, is awarded to a school that demonstrates strong commitment to combating racism in the school and in the local community. The initiatives of the school administration, teachers, pupils and parents to promote tolerance are recognized during a ceremony attended by the Minister of Education.

Wider Contexts of the Holocaust

National Socialist Germany organized a systematic, bureaucratically organized mechanism for the mass destruction of European Jewry. Its killing machinery, which not only murdered millions but also used their bodily remains for industrial purposes, marked a turning point in human history.

A composite photograph of identification badges and armbands worn by various groups of victims of the National Socialists, including Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma and Sinti, Poles, and criminals. Also included is the armband of a camp policeman. The badges and armbands are drawn from the collections of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.



The unprecedented character of the Holocaust has universal implications for the future. By learning about the Holocaust and also about other genocides, students will develop awareness that such crimes could happen again, to Jews or to others, perpetrated by human beings against other human beings; not in the same manner, but in similar ways. They will learn about people's responsibility in civil societies to speak up, prevent and stop genocide wherever it takes place in the world.

Students may be given an assignment to research genocides and crimes against humanity and write to parliamentarians, politicians, clergy and other leaders about the lessons of the Holocaust, dangers of totalitarianism, and the educational messages in preventing genocide in the future. For example, students may be referred to the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that was created by the US President's Commission on the Holocaust in 1979. When the US President's Commission on the Holocaust recommended the establishment of a living memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, it noted that no issue "was as perplexing or as urgent as the need to ensure that such a totally inhuman assault as the Holocaust – or any partial version thereof – never recurs."⁴

By showing how Jews were targeted for persecution, students will often better grasp these events. It should be kept in mind that although Jews were primarily targeted by the

⁴ For more information, see: <http://www.ushmm.org>

National Socialists and their collaborators, other victim groups suffered, such as Roma and Sinti; homosexuals; Jehovah's Witnesses; Poles; Russian prisoners of war; Communists and others. The fate of Roma and Sinti (who were also considered racially inferior by the National Socialists) under the National Socialist regime has not been widely commemorated. They should be remembered along with other Holocaust victims.

The commemoration of the liquidation of the *Zigeunerlager* ("Gypsy Camp") in Auschwitz-Birkenau on 2 August 1944, has been observed as Roma and Sinti Extermination Remembrance Day since 1997. In July 2005, the Roma community centre DROM, from Kumanovo in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, organized a public-awareness initiative focusing on the history and suffering of Roma and Sinti during World War II. Remembrance activities included a history lecture, an exhibition, poetry reading, and theatre and music performances aimed at highlighting Roma and Sinti culture, history and identity as well as the persecution of Roma and Sinti during World War II. A leaflet with the personal story of a Roma victim of the National Socialist extermination camps was also published. Leading officials and dignitaries in attendance focused on the importance of raising public consciousness about the fate of Roma and Sinti during World War II.



The Caravan of Memory has been organized on the initiative of the Association of the Roma in Tarnow and the local museum in July each year since 1996. The carriers move around the Polish city of Tarnow and other small towns and stop at the sites commemorating the victims of the Holocaust and of National Socialist persecution: the murdered Jews, the Roma victims shot by the National Socialists in 1943, and the first transport of Polish political prisoners to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The event serves to commemorate the Roma victims of National Socialist persecution, to integrate the Roma community into the local population as well as to present its history and culture. (Regional Museum, Tarnow)

III. Goals and Learning Outcomes

Within the framework of a Holocaust memorial day, educational objectives for both teachers and students include:

- Creating empathy with the victims and preserving their memory;
- Strengthening the importance of remembering the survivors, victims, rescuers and liberators;
- Recognizing that the Holocaust was a loss to civilization as a whole as well as the countries that were directly involved;
- Gaining a better understanding about the past;
- Increasing awareness of local, regional and national heritage;
- Increasing awareness about the danger of radical, extremist movements and totalitarian regimes;
- Raising consciousness about contemporary forms of anti-Semitism, xenophobia and all forms of hatred;
- Placing a spotlight on other genocides;
- Promoting respect for human rights, especially for minority groups;
- Sparking critical thinking and intellectual curiosity; and
- Fostering personal responsibility as democratic citizens

As Holocaust memorial days are usually only one day per year, it cannot be expected that during this day students will gain a full understanding of what happened under the National Socialist regime between 1933 and 1945. Although not all the above outlined objectives can realistically be achieved during a one-day activity, a consciousness of the importance of commemoration can be developed, and these remembrance activities can be an effective culmination of a more comprehensive study about the Holocaust.

IV. Practical Educational Strategies

Before engaging their students in remembrance activities, teachers themselves should be encouraged to learn more about this difficult subject as well as to network with colleagues who have previously attended teacher-training seminars on aspects of Holocaust education and remembrance. Whenever possible, educators should attend professional development courses on this topic. In all cases, educators should prepare well when organizing Holocaust memorial days. In general, teachers know their students best and therefore will approach Holocaust memorial days based on their assessment of their students' needs and abilities.

Many educators have successfully involved their local authorities, non-governmental organizations, media and community institutions in organizing educational events to commemorate the Holocaust with students.

Activities related to a Holocaust remembrance day may include the reciting of victims' names and poetry, watching films, visiting exhibitions, relating impressions of the students' trip to an authentic Holocaust site or Holocaust museum, performing plays or originally composed songs. For example, in Sfintul Gheorghe in Romania, students worked on a drama project to write and perform a play based on Elie Wiesel's well-known book, *Night*. Similar projects could be based around Anne Frank's diary.

Educators may consider adding a moment of silence within the framework of their commemoration ceremonies and/or activities. Although a brief period of silence can provide a space for students to connect with their inner feelings and thoughts about what happened during the Holocaust, it should not come in place of an actual learning process or a remembrance-day activity.

In Norway, the Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education encourages all schools to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day and provides educational resources on its website. Many schools organize poetry readings and exhibitions, whereas others coordinate local torchlight processions and invite Holocaust survivors and witnesses to recount their personal stories.



Auschwitz, Poland, postwar, Suitcases in the Museum, Yad Vashem



This suitcase, part of project for Holocaust Memorial Day, was created by students of the Remember Club, Vlaicu Voda National College, Romania, October 2004.

Witnesses, Testimonies and Visual History

Educators may wish to organize meetings with living witnesses (especially Holocaust survivors as well as liberators and rescuers), who can recount their experiences during the Second World War with students on this day. Live testimonies are very powerful and can contribute to a profound learning experience for students. In addition, previously recorded visual history testimonies can also be effective teaching tools. Teachers may wish to concentrate on what students learned from hearing the personal stories of witnesses and what they carry with them after listening to survivors' testimonies.



A former inmate near barracks in the camp, Bergen-Belsen, Germany. (Yad Vashem)



Children in the camp, raising their hands at the time of liberation, Auschwitz, Poland. (Yad Vashem)

Visiting Authentic Sites, Memorials, Museums

Study trips to Holocaust-related authentic sites, such as former extermination centres and concentration camps, can be very effective in raising students' understanding of what happened. In addition, class visits to Holocaust-related museums, memorials and educational centres can also provide pupils with special opportunities to gain awareness and knowledge about this subject. Field trips to Holocaust-related authentic sites and/or museums should be well prepared by educators prior to their visit, and follow-up activities and discussions with the students are highly recommended.⁵ Visits need not necessarily take place on the Holocaust memorial day itself, but the experience can help students understand the importance of commemoration and can be linked to later activities on a Holocaust memorial day.

Contacts with Jewish Communities

In many places, Jewish communities no longer exist as a result of the Holocaust and postwar anti-Semitism. However, a number of Jewish communities in Europe, which had once flourished for centuries, have begun to rebuild. Educators and their students are encouraged to contact members of their local Jewish communities for more information about various aspects of contemporary Jewish life and culture as well as about Jewish communal life before the Holocaust.

Student Introspection

Writing assignments in response to a classroom activity can encourage students' creativity and self expression as well as stimulate their intellectual curiosity. Essay competitions have often been organized as an incentive to both students and teachers to

⁵ For guidelines on visiting authentic and non-authentic Holocaust-related sites, see <http://www.holocaust.taskforce.org>

focus on a Holocaust-related theme. Keep in mind that some students may want to keep their inner feelings about this emotional and difficult subject private.

Remembrance via Modern Technology

Incorporating modern technology can be a very effective tool in fostering Holocaust remembrance. For example, organizing exchanges via an Internet forum between students who have read the same book or text in different languages or co-ordinating video conferences between youth at a national or international level can successfully encourage dialogue on the meanings of Holocaust memorial days. In addition, these virtual meetings can deepen students' appreciation of belonging to a larger international community.

In 2005, German students from the Goethe-Gymnasium in Frankfurt-am-Main, who had previously visited the Buchenwald concentration camp, had a video conference with a Jewish Holocaust survivor and researcher, Dr. Jehoshua Buechler. After recounting his personal story, the students were given the opportunity to ask him questions, especially about his internment in Buchenwald. Staff members from the International School of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem participated in the dialogue and moderated the session. For most of the students, this was their first opportunity to speak openly with a Jewish Holocaust survivor living in Israel.

Local History

Local history projects, such as tours of remembrance in home towns and cities, can encourage students to connect with the history of where they live. Through investigating local history students can learn about the importance of Jewish culture in many European cities before the Holocaust as well the ways in which restrictions were gradually imposed on Jewish inhabitants before they were deported to extermination camps or killed.

In 2004 prior to 23 September (Holocaust Memorial Day in Lithuania), the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania co-ordinated an educational project entitled, "The Living History of Lithuanian Jews." Students and their teachers collected historical material about the daily life, religion, and culture of Jews who lived in their towns before the Holocaust. In addition, they participated in guided tours, arranged meetings with the survivors and representatives of local Jewish communities. This work culminated in the presentation, "The Life of Jews in My Town before the Holocaust" on 23 September 2004 in their respective schools.

A school in Warsaw undertook an extensive Holocaust remembrance project that was conducted throughout the school year, culminating on Holocaust Memorial Day on 19 April, which marks the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. In preparation of an exhibition about the Warsaw Ghetto, students selected and created materials related to remembrance sites located near their school, such as the monuments of the Warsaw Ghetto and *Umschlagplatz* (the place from which Jews were deported to extermination camps). They also prepared a display case about all of the synagogues that once existed in Warsaw.



Exhibition of student projects at the conference "Live History of Lithuanian Jews" on National Holocaust Remembrance Day in Lithuania, 23 September 2004.

On Holocaust Memorial Day in Poland on 19 April, Polish school children from Lublin and other surrounding towns wrote 500 letters to Henio Żytomirski, a ten-year old Polish-Jewish boy who was murdered at Majdanek in 1942 as part of a project initiated by the Grodzka Gate – Theatre NN. The students posted their letters in a specially designed mailbox. All the letters were returned to their senders' homes stamped "address non-existent, recipient unknown" to create an impetus for discussion in the home about what happened to the Jewish population of Europe during the Holocaust.

The project also included tours around places in Lublin related to Henio's childhood; publication of an artistic-educational booklet entitled "Henio" that was distributed among schools; and the creation of a website dedicated to Henio with his family photos and biography. Teacher-training workshops that emphasized pedagogical methodology were also organized in conjunction with this initiative.



Laying flowers at the memorial in Birkenau, 27 October 2004. Russian high-school students from Moscow participated in the seminar "Auschwitz - History and Symbolism" organized by the education centre of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. (ICEAH, Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum).

Research Assignments

Teachers and their students can successfully engage in many kinds of research projects on Holocaust commemoration.

A group of Hungarian students and teachers worked together on a bilingual (English and Hungarian) project entitled “Personal History” in Autumn 2004. The first piece of the series, “Auschwitz Diary”, was based on the memories of a seventeen-year-old boy written in 1945 after the war. The student team digitized and edited the volume. They also researched photographs and translated the manuscript into English. A bilingual CD-ROM and an accompanying teachers’ guide were also published.

The “60 Days for 60 Years” project run by a Jewish community in the United Kingdom was addressed to members of local communities and students from all backgrounds. The initiative was launched on 25 January 2005 and lasted for sixty days. The participants researched the daily lives of individuals who died in the Holocaust based on information collected from “Pages of Testimony” of Yad Vashem. Each person, group or family who joins the “60 Days for 60 Years” project received a card with the name of a person who perished in the Holocaust. Each community or school was linked with a community that suffered in the Holocaust.⁶

Research projects for a Holocaust memorial day can also focus on questions such as: How is the Holocaust memorial day remembered at the national level and in other countries? Are the days the same or different, and why were these choices made? Why is this date significant? What does the date 27 January signify? What other days could have been chosen? Suggest that students research websites, such as those provided below, to obtain this information.

In Bulgaria, 10 March has been designated as the “Day of the Holocaust and Saving of the Bulgarian Jews” (known also as the Day of Holocaust Victims). This remembrance day is nationally commemorated in Bulgarian schools with a special lesson called “10 March: Lesson of Dignity.” Commemoration activities include meetings with survivors, visits to monuments and other sites, art and essay competitions on the topic, and research projects on primary-source documents.

Restoring Cemeteries

Educators may wish to consider organizing local research projects that culminate in a class outing to restore and or clean Jewish cemeteries in connection with Holocaust Memorial Day.

The Lauder Javne Jewish Community School in Budapest, Hungary, runs a one-week summer program for students to clean up a deserted Jewish cemetery. Students clean graves from the vegetation growing on them and fix fallen tombstones. They also interpret the data of epitaphs and try to reconstruct the history of the once existing Jewish community. At the end of the activity, the participants remember all those who perished in the Holocaust, which brought an end to a once flourishing Jewish community. Some local schools and municipalities join the project.

⁶ For more information, visit <http://www.60for60.com>.



Students cleaning a deserted Jewish cemetery in Szob, Hungary, 2002. (Lauder Javne Jewish Community School in Budapest)

Adopting Local Monuments

Maintaining a monument can be an effective way for students to demonstrate social responsibility in their respective communities. In adopting a local monument, students may be encouraged to consider various aspects, such as:

- What specific event is the monument dedicated to? Are people still alive directly connected to this event with whom students can converse, or whose testimony has been made available (in writing or on video)?
- When was the monument unveiled and what does this say about the way in which the local community has commemorated the Holocaust? Students can be encouraged to talk to people involved in the history of the monument itself.
- Students can study artistic or architectural aspects of the monument. Who designed it? What does it appear to express? How does the monument relate to other monuments? Which language of icons is used in this monument and does it reflect the time in which it was erected?
- Students can be challenged to design their own monument to a local event related to the Holocaust.

In the Netherlands, schools have been encouraged to ‘adopt’ a local monument dedicated to the Holocaust. Schools can arrange with their local councils that students of a certain class will invest time and effort in the upkeep of the monument before commemoration on an annual basis. The students can play an important role in the preparation of the commemoration and during the ceremony itself by taking on the responsibility for a monument. This initiative strengthens the commitment of the school administration to teach about the Holocaust, reflect on the meaning of commemoration and connect with the community.

The Dutch website www.oorlogsmonumenten.nl/datakid is devoted to monuments related to the Second World War. The site details more than 700 monuments that Dutch schools have adopted.

Social Action Projects

Suggestions for social action projects include: putting up posters that focus on themes of remembrance at public transportation stops; identifying sites where deportations took place or where Jews once lived; and asking local authorities to work with the school to create memorials. Creating remembrance campaigns in student union organizations, youth movements, religious congregations or planting a garden of remembrance are options that some educators may wish to explore further.

Passing the Torch of Memory

In the next few years, there will be very few living witnesses able to transmit their personal stories and memories about what happened during the Holocaust. As the last Holocaust survivors pass on their legacy, educators together with their students can build the bridges of remembrance to future generations to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust are not forgotten. It is hoped that these guidelines on preparing Holocaust memorial days will serve educators in this important mission.

Appendix 1. Additional References and Further Information

It is highly recommended that professional development workshops on preparing for a Holocaust memorial day are requested from ministries of education, teachers' associations and non-governmental organizations.

For additional guidelines on the rationale for teaching about the Holocaust as well as suggestions on how to approach this topic in the classroom, see:

<http://www.holocausttaskforce.org>

A number of curricula and other resources are available on the Internet or are accessible in pedagogical resource centres and libraries. See, for example:

Yad Vashem:

<http://www.yadvashem.org>

OSCE/ODIHR:

<http://www.osce.org/odihr>

Council of Europe:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/education/Teaching_Remembrance

Erinnern – Austria:

<http://www.erinnern.at>

Mechelen Museum of Deportation and the Resistance – Belgium:

<http://www.cicb.be>

Terezin Memorial – Czech Republic:

<http://www.pamatnik-terezin.cz>

Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine – France:

<http://www.cdjc.org>

Memorial Museums in Germany for the Victims of National Socialism – Germany:

<http://www.topographie.de>

Memorial Sites for the Victims of the Nazi Regime – Germany:

<http://www.memorial-museums.net>

The Ghetto Fighters House-Beit Lohamei Hagetaot – Israel:

<http://gfh.org.il>

Fondazione Centro di Documentazione Ebraica Contemporanea - Italy:

<http://www.cdec.it>

International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania – Lithuania

<http://www.komisija.lt>

Anne Frank House – Netherlands:

<http://www.annefrank.org>

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum – Poland:

<http://www.auschwitz.org.pl>

Russian Holocaust Foundation – Russian Federation:

<http://www.holofond.ru>

Living History Forum – Sweden:

<http://www.levandehistoria.org>

Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies – Ukraine:

<http://www.holocaust.kiev.ua>

Britain's Holocaust Memorial Day – United Kingdom:

<http://www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk>

Holocaust Educational Trust – United Kingdom:

<http://www.het.org.uk>

The Imperial War Museum – United Kingdom:

<http://www.iwn.org.org.uk/lambeth/holoc-ex1.htm>

Facing History and Ourselves – United States of America:

<http://www.facinghistory.org>

The Simon Wiesenthal Center – United States of America:

<http://www.wiesenthal.com>

Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation – United States of America:

<http://www.vhf.org>

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum – United States of America:

<http://www.ushmm.org>

Appendix II. Holocaust Remembrance in OSCE Participating States

Eighteen of the 55 OSCE participating States have established a Holocaust memorial day on 27 January. In 13 states, a Holocaust memorial day is designated on a different date relevant to the Holocaust events of the individual country. In six participating States, the commemoration of Holocaust victims is incorporated into their national memorial days, which are not specifically Holocaust memorial days.

| OSCE participating State | Date of Holocaust memorial day |
|--------------------------|---|
| Albania | 27 January is designated as the Day of Remembrance. |
| Austria | 5 May is designated as the Day of Remembrance against Violence and Racism in Memory of the Victims of National Socialism. The date signifies the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp in 1945. |
| Belgium | 27 January is designated as a national day of commemoration of the Holocaust. |
| Bulgaria | 10 March is designated as the Day of the Holocaust and Saving of the Bulgarian Jews (known also as the Day of Holocaust Victims). The date signifies the 1943 efforts by the Bulgarian parliamentarians to halt deportations of Bulgarian Jews to National Socialist concentration camps. |
| Canada | Yom HaShoah (27 th of Nissan of the Hebrew calendar) is designated as the national Holocaust memorial day. |
| Croatia | 27 January is designated as the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity. |
| Czech Republic | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Denmark | 27 January is designated as Auschwitz Day. |
| Estonia | 27 January is designated as the Day of Remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust and crimes against humanity. |
| Finland | 27 January is designated as Victims of Persecution Memorial Day. |
| France | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Germany | 27 January is designated as Memorial Day for the Victims of the Nazi Crimes. Many groups hold commemoration ceremonies on 9 November, the anniversary of the Reichkristallnacht of 1938. |
| Greece | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Hungary | 16 April is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. The date signifies the establishment of the first Hungarian ghetto. |
| Ireland | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Italy | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Latvia | 4 July is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. The date signifies the National Socialists' burning in 1941 of the Riga Choral Synagogue with Jews trapped inside. |
| Liechtenstein | 27 January is designated as the Holocaust Remembrance Day for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity. |

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| Lithuania | 23 September is designated as the National Day for the Genocide of the Lithuanian Jews. The date signifies the 1943 murder of the remaining prisoners of the Vilnius ghetto. |
| Luxembourg | 10 October is designated as the Day of National Commemoration. The date signifies the 1941 referendum. |
| Norway | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Poland | 19 April is designated as the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust and Prevention of Crimes against Humanity. The date signifies the beginning of the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. |
| Romania | 9 October is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. The date signifies the beginning of the 1941 massive deportations of Jews to Transnistria. |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 22 April is designated as the Day of Remembrance of Genocide Victims. The date signifies the 1945 uprising by the prisoners of the Jasenovac concentration camp (this is applicable only to Serbia; there is no Holocaust memorial day in Montenegro). |
| Slovakia | 9 September is designated as the Day of Victims of the Holocaust and Racial Violence. The date signifies the introduction of the Jewish Code of 1941. |
| Spain | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Sweden | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Switzerland | 27 January is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |
| Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | 12 March is designated a Holocaust memorial day. The date signifies the 1943 deportation of Jews by the Bulgarian occupation forces to National Socialist death camps. |
| United Kingdom | 27 January is designated as a national Holocaust memorial day. |
| United States of America | Yom HaShoah (27th of Nissan of the Hebrew calendar) is designated as a Holocaust memorial day. |

| OSCE participating State | National memorial day and commemoration of the Holocaust victims |
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| Armenia | The National Genocide Memorial Day incorporates a universal remembrance day. No particular Holocaust memorial day. |
| Georgia | Holocaust victims are included in commemorations of those who died in the two world wars. No particular Holocaust memorial day. |
| Kazakhstan | 31 May is the date for the commemoration of the victims of political repression. Holocaust victims are included in the commemorations. |
| Netherlands | The commemoration of the Holocaust is tied into the national remembrance of all the Dutch victims of the war on 4 May. |
| Slovenia | Commemorations are held to remember all the victims of fascism and National Socialism on 9 May. |
| Uzbekistan | The commemoration of the Holocaust victims is conducted in the framework of the National Day of Memory and Honour for the Victims Who Perished for the Independence of the Motherland on 9 May. No distinctive Holocaust memorial day. |