

**ACS/Andrew W. Mellon
Faculty Renewal Program, Professional Development
Grant Report**

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The Shoah in 21st Century Europe: Memories and Memorials

I. Original Goals and Anticipated Outcomes

The original goals were (1) to visit and study Holocaust-related sites in Berlin and Krakow and (2) to meet with European Jewish communities in order to examine the memorial legacy each offers.

The anticipated outcomes of the project were (1) to enhance our existing courses; (2) to develop new courses, such as a joint travel course on the “Shoah: Memorialization, and Memory” with students from Hendrix and Millsaps in May of 2011 and/or jointly taught on-campus courses in the 2011-2012 school year; (3) to present a Millsaps-Hendrix conference open to ACS members in the 2011-2012 school year; and (4) to provide a model for future intellectual and academic collaboration by ACS faculty and students.

II. Meeting our Goals

A. Details of Our Trip

From 22 June – 1 July 2010 we travelled to Berlin and Krakow. We arrived in Berlin on 23 June and departed for Krakow on 27 June.

In Berlin we visited the following museums, memorials, and Holocaust sites:

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and adjacent museum (6/23)
Jewish Museum Berlin (6/24)
Topography of Terror Museum (6/24)
Jüdischer Friedhof (Jewish cemetery) in Prenzlauer Berg (6/25)

Neue Synagogue and adjacent museum (new synagogue) (6/25)
 Jewish Community Center (6/25)
 Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp (6/26)

In addition, we attended Friday evening Shabbat services at the Rykestrasse (Ryke Street) Synagogue.

In Krakow, we visited the following museums, memorials, and Holocaust sites:

Kazimierz Old Jewish Quarter (6/27 and 6/28)
 Galicia Jewish Museum (6/28)
 Krakow Ghetto and Deportation Monument (6/28)
 Holocaust Monument at Plaszow (6/28)
 Auschwitz Jewish Center (6/29)
 Auschwitz Concentration Camp (6/29)
 Schindler Factory Museum (6/30; Marianne)
 Pharmacy "Under the Eagle" Museum (6/30; Marianne)
 Jewish Community Centre (6/30; Marianne)

While Marianne spent 6/30 in Krakow, James traveled to Warsaw and visited the following:

Nozyk Synagogue in Warsaw
 Offices of Jewish Community of Warsaw
 Nathan Rappaport Memorial to Heroes of Warsaw Ghetto
 Museum of the History of Polish Jews
 The Monument to the Heroes of the Warsaw Uprising

We were fortunate that our visit to Krakow coincided with the annual Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow, which enabled us to take special tours led by local Jewish community members and other experts within Kazimierz and to attend panel discussions.

While in Krakow we also had in-person and phone conversations with the following people involved in Jewish museums and the preservation of Jewish sites:

Weronika Litwin, Project Coordinator, Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland
 Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, Center for Holocaust Studies, Jagiellonian University
 Kate Craddy, Director, Galicia Jewish Museum
 Jonathan Ornstein, Director, Jewish Community Centre

Domestic travel:

We decided to use some of the remaining funds to visit Holocaust memorials in the U.S. in regions with smaller Jewish communities, similar to our own, to see how memorials were being presented and used by those communities.

Thus, James visited (16-18 December 2010):

- Institute for Holocaust Education (Omaha)
Spoke at length, with Beth Seldin Dotan, Executive Director, and with Dr. Guy Matalon, Jewish Federation of Omaha Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- Nebraska Holocaust Memorial (Lincoln), a project of the Heartland Holocaust Educational Fund

On April 29-30, James traveled to New Orleans and visited:

- The National World War II Museum
- The New Orleans Holocaust Memorial
- Judah Touro Synagogue

B. Reflections on Our Trips

Marianne Tettlebaum:

The contrast between Berlin and Krakow proved instructive for me in considering the issue of Holocaust memorialization and the legacy of the Holocaust in the remaining Jewish communities. I learned that, in comparison with Krakow, Berlin has had a much longer time to come to terms with the role of the Holocaust its past. While Krakow has had just as long to consider the consequences of Germany's invasion and the fate of Polish victims, only since the fall of communism has it become fully aware of the plight of its Jewish victims and of the difficult issue of assessing Polish responsibility for what befell Polish Jews. As we learned from the tours and panels we attended as part of the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow—and from the

officials we met (see the list above under I. A.)—during communism, the prevalent narrative, at least in Krakow, was of *Polish* victimhood. The issue of Polish complicity in *Jewish* victimhood, therefore, was deliberately not discussed. The pogroms that plagued those Jews who managed to survive or return to Krakow after the war forced the remaining Jewish population to emigrate, go underground, or attempt to abandon their Jewish identity.

I found that this difference between Germany and Poland in coming to terms with the legacy of the Holocaust is reflected not only in the museums and memorials of the two cities but also in their synagogues and Jewish community centers. I must admit that I am still myself attempting to come to terms with exactly how to articulate the role this difference plays, especially in the museums and memorials. I can, at the very least, offer the example of my experience at Sachsenhausen (near Berlin) vs. my experience at Auschwitz (near Krakow).

To me, Sachsenhausen had a quiet, pensive dignity. I found the exhibits and information extremely compelling, and I wanted to read and absorb absolutely every detail in order to understand exactly how the camp functioned and why. The exhibits at Sachsenhausen, in other words, seemed to me aimed at helping the visitor to comprehend the system and philosophy of the concentration camp. Auschwitz, admittedly, because we were visiting at the height of tourist season, felt like Disneyland, not just because of the number of tourists but also because of the way the tours and exhibits encouraged visitors to indulge in fantasies, albeit grotesque ones. There was little printed material to read along with exhibits and the tour guide would encourage us at each spot to “imagine” being tortured, starved, shot, etc, as if the capacity to imagine what happened is synonymous not only with understanding what happened but also with having meaningfully experienced what happened. Whereas Sachsenhausen gave me the information I felt I needed to form my own picture, Auschwitz left me feeling manipulated and

like an uncritical voyeur, compelled out of sensation to watch something without really knowing why.

How might this experience relate to the different ways in which Germany and Poland have come to terms with the Holocaust? I was surprised to learn at the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow that all of our young tour guides, who were also studying Jewish history at the University, were not themselves Jewish. I found the zeal with which they had taken up the study of Krakow's Jewish history both impressive and problematic—impressive because they were dedicating themselves to such a painful episode in their country's history; problematic to the extent that, by immersing themselves in the Jewish history of Poland, they could better claim that history as their own. It is this question of ownership that perhaps best starts to account for the contrast in my experience at Sachsenhausen and at Auschwitz and at other museums and memorials in Berlin and Krakow. Berlin seems to me to have no desire to “own” the Holocaust at the same time that it recognizes that it cannot be fully disowned; its memorials and museums, I think, are ultimately aimed at capturing this potentially paradoxical situation, at providing knowledge of the facts, the statistics, the communities, the torture, etc., without claiming to provide the kind of experience or understanding that would lead toward ownership. Krakow, in contrast, seems to me to want to regain the ownership of the Holocaust that it lost during communism. Many of its memorials and museums seem to reflect the potentially well-meaning but ultimately misguided belief that the imagination of suffering can atone for the actual experience of it..

James Bowley

I would concur with Marianne's reflection and here simply add some additional thoughts. I was completely struck by the remarkable interest in Jewish culture in Poland and especially

Krakow. Alongside this interest is a resurgence of Jewish culture, of course. These realities have and will added another dimension to our planning and execution of a program and course about memorialization and memorials. How does this resurgence relate to the Shoah? In what ways is the Shoah being presented? What are motivations involved?

Another major outcome for me was highlighted by my discussions with Beth Dotan at the Institute for Holocaust Education, who stresses the importance of making local and social connections for students and other participants when doing holocaust education. I now hope to take students to local Shoah memorials (e.g. at local synagogues, and in New Orleans) and to discuss the reasons and ideas of these memorials in their own world and link those memorials to what they see in Europe. I also plan to make links to social issues of current experience, such as current forms of racism or civil rights era issues with which students are familiar, in ways that I had not contemplated prior to my discussions with Ms. Dotan.

The discussions with Ms. Dotan, led me to travel to New Orleans to study the New Orleans Holocaust Memorial, the National World War II Museum, and the Judah Touro Synagogue, in order to consider how these monuments and organizations reflect on and represent the Shoah. It was an enlightening trip, which raised interesting questions for my Shoah class regarding the of the social role of memorials in urban environments in the United States and in the South in particular, the juxtaposition of Shoah with WWII memorials and education, and the role of art in shaping public awareness and memory in the public landscape. I now believe that travel to New Orleans as a class would be worthwhile for serving to engage students in the topic at a localized level.

III. Outcomes

A. To Enhance Our Existing Courses and Programs

Marianne Tettlebaum

For me, the different memorial legacies of the Holocaust in Germany and Poland have already affected the way I teach not only the post-war history of Judaism but also questions of Jewish identity. My non-Jewish students often have difficulty understanding how one can be Jewish without being religiously observant. Here the experience of post-war Jews in Krakow has provided a powerful example. Jews who stayed often hid their Judaism, even from their children, and yet their children always had a sense that they were different. With the fall of communism, many of those children, now adults, realized that this experience of difference was due to the fact that they were actually Jewish. As I learned from Community Centre Director Jonathan Ornstein, the majority of the people the Community Centre serves are those who have newly discovered their Judaism, who have suddenly been able to put the name “Jewish” to their difference and want to learn what that means. Their experience, while not resolving all the confusion my students experience, at least provides a concrete example we can study and debate.

The trip has also enabled me to engage in closer collaboration with my colleagues at the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling, which sponsored its own trip for faculty and students last summer to Holocaust sites in Poland and the Czech Republic. I have been working with these colleagues to plan an event at Hendrix College that will enable them and me to share our experiences in a public format for our other students and colleagues.

Finally, simply undertaking the trip has made me aware of a need on the part of all those—both in the Hendrix and in the larger communities—who have undertaken similar trips to Holocaust memorials and concentration camp sites but do not yet feel they have had enough or

the right kind of opportunity to discuss how the trip affected them. This need to discuss the experience of the Holocaust trip led me to rethink the nature of the commemoration the Crain-Maling Center of Jewish Culture puts on annually for Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day). My goal for this event has, in the past, been to expose a passive audience to the experience either of a survivor or other expert in the field order for that audience to learn what happened. But the more I talk with people who have undertaken Holocaust trips similar to mine, the more I see a need for an event that engages and provides a meaningful outlet for those people to discuss their trips, perhaps even that helps them relate their experience in a thoughtful and respectful way to that of victims and survivors. Thus, I am now considering how to make our Yom Hashoah event this April and other events in the future more inclusive and interactive by recognizing that the experience of the visitor to Holocaust memorials and sites, while by no means comparable to that of victim or survivor, itself merits reflection and study and has something to contribute to how we understand the legacy of the Holocaust.

James Bowley

Nearly all of my classes involve Judaica in some way, and I have found that my experiences in Berlin, Warsaw, and Krakow especially have already aided my teaching about the experience and re-birth of Jewish culture and communities in Europe. I have also revised my notes for my lectures on the Holocaust in Millsaps's signature course, Heritage of the West in World Perspective. Finally, I have thoroughly revamped my lesson plans for my Shoah course.

B. To develop new courses, such as a joint travel course on the “Shoah: Memorialization, and Memory” with students from Hendrix and Millsaps in May of 2011 and/or jointly taught on-campus courses in the 2011-2012 school year

Because Marianne is expecting her first child at the end of February, she will be unable to participate in a joint travel course in May of this year. She remains, however, committed to the development of a joint travel course. Instead of traveling herself on the course, however, she would prefer to use resources to finance the travel of other interested colleagues, so that others can have the opportunity to have the experience she did. This opportunity could be presented to other colleagues at Hendrix or extended to colleagues at other ACS institutions.

Marianne and James would also like to consider the possibility of opening the trip to all ACS students, not only to those at Millsaps and Hendrix. Here study abroad courses, such as that of the University of Colorado Boulder to Jewish sites in Italy, which are open to students at institutions throughout the United States, could serve as a useful models of how to organize a Jewish-related study trip among more than two institutions.

From the contacts we made in Krakow, we also learned of the tremendous need in Poland for volunteers to help with the work of preserving Jewish sites, such as cemeteries and synagogues. We now think our course might benefit from a service component in which students also gain firsthand experience of the process of memorialization by helping out directly with the restoration and preservation of Jewish sites.

Finally, Marianne is in the initial stages of researching possible grants that could help offset the costs for participants of a travel course.

C. To present a Millsaps-Hendrix conference open to ACS members in the 2011-2012 school year.

The Crain-Maling Center of Jewish Culture remains committed to sponsoring a conference for all ACS members. Marianne intends that the Yom Hashoah event the Crain-

Maling Center of Jewish Culture holds this April at Hendrix College (please see under section III. A. above) serve as the model for this conference.

D. To provide a model for future intellectual and academic collaboration by ACS faculty and students.

As stated in section III. B. above, Marianne would prefer to enable others to participate in a joint-travel course on Holocaust Memorials rather than travel herself. The Crain-Maling Center of Jewish Culture could sponsor a workshop at Hendrix or Millsaps College to prepare other faculty to lead such a course, especially those who are interested but do not have much prior expertise. With such a workshop in place, the course could facilitate collaboration on a broader scale and between faculty members who might not otherwise have a chance to work together. Also, as stated in section III. B. above, the course could be opened up to students throughout the ACS.

IV. Assessment

A. Written Reflections on the Trip

These are included as part of section I. B. above.

B. Conference Surveys

As stated in sections III. B. and C. above, Marianne intends the Crain-Maling Center of Jewish Culture's commemoration of Yom Hashoah at Hendrix this April as a model for an ACS-wide conference on Holocaust memorials and memorialization, to be hosted by the Center at Hendrix in 2011-12. To this end, Marianne will collect written surveys from participants about

this April's Yom Hashoah event and use that data in helping to plan the conference.¹ Surveys will also be collected from participants of the Holocaust Conference.

C. Comparison with Holocaust Travel Courses at Other Institutions

In assessing the potential of our trip to serve as a model for a joint travel course, we reviewed information available on Holocaust travel courses offered through other institutions of higher education. (As far as we could tell, there is no such course already offered through any of the ACS institutions, although Furman University does hold a Holocaust Institute for K-12 educators).

Overall the courses we surveyed visit a similar set of memorials and Holocaust sites to the ones we visited; the average cost for participants is in the \$3000 range. Most of the courses combine a whirlwind tour of these sites with some background reading, done either during or in advance of the course, and many explore issues similar to the ones that guided our trip. For instance, “students [will] explore the multiple discourses of commemorating the Holocaust in contemporary German public culture” (<http://www.kennesaw.edu/studyabroad/programs/germany1.html>; accessed on 3/26/11); or, “by touring major sites associated with the Nazi State and the Holocaust, this program provides an opportunity to study not only the facts of this epoch but

¹ Those surveys are available to view on <http://www.surveymonkey.com> with username “ACSGRANT” and password “43011.” At the event—“The Responsibility of the Viewer: A Holocaust Presentation and Discussion”—Marianne’s colleague art professor Matthew Lopas presented on his service trip with Hendrix’s Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling to Holocaust sites in Poland. His participation in that trip was sponsored by the Crain-Maling Center of Jewish Culture. Marianne asked Professor Lopas to consider the following questions, which served as the basis for a general discussion following his presentation: What is the responsibility of those who visit concentration camp sites - especially in light of the passing of the actual survivors and, thus, of those capable of firsthand accounts? Is there a certain way visitors should behave? Is there a certain way visitors should respond afterwards? In order to consider these questions from another perspective, Marianne also invited faculty members who participated in Hendrix College trips to Rwanda.

examine and reflect on their meaning and memorialization today” (http://www.uwsp.edu/studyabroad/destinations/germ_nazi.aspx; accessed on 3/26.11). Most trips are also led by a single faculty member, although some involve an interdisciplinary group of faculty.

Albion College offers perhaps the most desirable model for us in that it combines a service component (students help to restore a cemetery in Wrocław, Poland) with an academic component. Such a combination would work well with our project, because it gives students a firsthand experience of the legacy of the Holocaust in a given community. It also involves, via the service component, the kind of experiential learning that has become a hallmark of Hendrix College’s educational mission.

Thus, we have concluded:

- 1) The sites we visited are, for the most part, the standard on most trips.
- 2) In order to engage students meaningfully in the communities we visit and in order not simply to replicate the offerings of many of the other programs, we will want to consider a more innovative course model than what is described above as course readings plus a whirlwind tour—perhaps a service trip along the lines of what is offered by Albion College.
- 3) We think the approach of traveling in an interdisciplinary team of faculty suits our project well.
- 4) The exploration of the topic of memorials is already a common one among Holocaust travel courses, which gives us the opportunity to use these courses as standards but to personalize the topic, so to speak, to fit ACS students and the interests of ACS faculty and to expand upon the topic to reflect developments in this particular field of Holocaust Studies.

D. Travel Course Discussions and Surveys

In preparing for the joint travel course we will conduct informal focus group discussions with colleagues and students from our own institutions who have also traveled to Holocaust sites in order to have them help us assess, based on their own experience, possible itineraries and learning goals. At Hendrix College these groups will include students who have travelled to Holocaust sites through the Hendrix Odyssey Program as well as students and faculty who travelled as part of a service trip sponsored by the Miller Center for Vocation, Ethics, and Calling. At Millsaps College, these groups will include participants in the annual summer European Travel Program of the Else School of Management and in the European Studies Program.

Participants in the travel courses (and any associated workshops for faculty) will fill out written evaluations at the end of each course.