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### Visiting Holocaust: Related Sites in Germany with Medical Students as an Aid to Teaching Medical Ethics and Human Rights

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# Visiting Holocaust: Related Sites in Germany with Medical Students as an Aid to Teaching Medical Ethics and Human Rights

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## Abstract

*Many doctors and nurses played a key role in Nazism. They were responsible for the sterilization and murder of people with disabilities. Nazi doctors used concentration camp inmates as guinea pigs in medical experiments that had military or racial objectives. What we have learnt about the behaviour of doctors and nurses during the Nazi period enables us to reflect on several issues in present-day medicine (research limitations, decision making at the beginning and the end of a life and the relationship between physicians and the State). In some authors' opinions, the teaching of the medical aspects of the Holocaust could be a new model for education relating to professionalism, Human Rights, Bioethics and the respect of diversity. Teaching Medicine and the Holocaust could be a way of informing doctors and nurses of violations of ethics in the past. Moreover, a study trip to Holocaust and medicine related sites has strong pedagogical value. Visiting Holocaust related sites, T4 centres and the places where medical experiments were carried out has a special meaning for medical students. Additionally, tolerance, anti-discrimination, and the value of human life can be both taught and learned through this curriculum. The following article recounts our experiences of organizing and supervising a study trip with a group of medical students to some Holocaust and medicine related sites in Berlin and Hadamar (Germany). The study tour included lectures at universities in Düsseldorf and Berlin.*

**Key-words:** *Holocaust; Bioethics; Nazi doctors; Professionalism; Human Rights*

## I. Teaching Medicine and the Holocaust

During the Nazi period, many doctors played key roles as perpetrators of countless criminal acts,<sup>1</sup> which included the forced sterilization and the extermination of people with mental and physical disabilities,<sup>2</sup> medical experiments with no regard for the subjects<sup>3</sup> and mass extermination of Jews, Sinti Roma, Gypsies and homosexuals. These atrocities performed by physicians were exposed during “The Doctor’s Case,” one of the Nuremberg Trials, which led to the creation of the Nuremberg Code, an international bioethical regulation meant to govern human research.<sup>4</sup>

Analysis of the actions carried out by Nazi doctors<sup>5</sup> offers a valuable tool for providing insight into the ethical dilemmas which modern-day doctors and nurses may experience in their working lives, including research limitations, beginning or end of life decisions, and the influence of economic and political issues on their work.<sup>6</sup> Knowledge of the past reinforces the importance of the present emphasis on bioethical values in the training of health professionals.<sup>7</sup> We believe that the curricular content for the teaching of future doctors has to be supplemented with resources related to Medical Humanities, and we realize that the Holocaust would allow us to teach students ethical values. Visiting the historical sites and reading testimonies of the victims in the same places where those tragic events happened add a special significance to the learning experience.

In 2011, the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid, Spain, announced a call to faculty members to create elective courses concerning Human Rights and the combating of all forms of discrimination. These elective subjects were designated as complementary curricula included in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). We submitted the project: “The Holocaust: Lessons for

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur L. Caplan, “How Did Medicine Go So Wrong,” in *When Medicine Went Mad: Bioethics and the Holocaust*, edited by Arthur L. Caplan (Totowa, New Jersey: Humana Press, 1992), 61-78.

<sup>2</sup> Susan Bachrach, “In the Name of Public Health – Nazi Racial Hygiene,” *New England Journal of Medicine* 351, no. 5 (2004): 417-418.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Weindling, “Peak Years, 1942 to 1944,” in *Victims and Survivors of Nazi Human Experiments. Science and Suffering in the Holocaust*, ed. Paul Weindling, 69-108 (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> Michael A. Grodin, “Historical Origins of the Nuremberg Code,” in *The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code. Human Rights in Human Experimentation*, eds. George J. Annas, and Michael A. Grodin (New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 134-135.

<sup>5</sup> Joel Geiderman, “Physician Complicity in the Holocaust: Historical Review and Reflections on Emergency Medicine in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Part I,” *Academic Emergency Medicine* 9, no. 3 (2002): 224-229.

<sup>6</sup> Tessa Chelouche, “Medicine and the Holocaust – Lessons for Present and Future Physicians,” *Medicine and Law* 27, no. 4 (2008): 794-801.

<sup>7</sup> Shmuel P. Reis, Hedy S. Wald, Paul Weindling, “The Holocaust, Medicine and Becoming a Physician: The Crucial Role of Education,” *Israel Journal of Health Policy Research* 8 (2019): 55-61.

Medicine” and after receiving approval, we have been teaching the course for the last 7 years. There are eight modules in the course:<sup>8</sup>

- Historical frameworks (1918-1945).
- A workshop on how to analyze written and audio-visual documents.
- The role of doctors and nurses in Eugenics and the so-called Euthanasia program.
- Jewish doctors in ghettos and camps.
- Nazi doctors in concentration and extermination camps.
- Medical experiments in camps.
- The medical and psychological consequences faced by Holocaust survivors/ Traces of the Nazi period in Medicine today.
- Lessons from the Holocaust for present day Medicine.

Each module lasts two hours and includes a lecture with audio-visual content. The methodology encourages active participation and debate. Every week, each student prepares a written assignment on one of the five case studies presented, based on documents that include testimonies of victims, statements made by Nazi doctors and descriptions of ethical dilemmas.<sup>9</sup> On completion, the students upload their finished work onto the online learning platform, Moodle®. In the last module, “Lessons from the Holocaust for present day Medicine,” we encourage students to search modern media for any examples that illustrate recent breakdowns of ethical values. The aim of this activity is for students to be aware that the events discussed in class could, in fact, happen again.

The students’ evaluation of the course has been very positive in all cases. Every year the university conducts a student satisfaction survey. Out of a maximum mark of 5, the average rating for all the university subjects (2014-2018) was 3.74 and the score for *The Holocaust: Lessons for Medicine* was 4.57. In the comments section, students stated that the classes gave them a more humane perspective on medicine, they realized the importance of learning from history, and that the subject is related to current events. We conducted a survey of our students’ opinions on some bioethical issues before and after the 2014, 2015, and 2016 classes. The results showed our course is a contributor to upholding and developing professional values.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Esteban González-López, Rosa Ríos-Cortés, *The Holocaust: Lessons for Medicine*, <https://afly.co/9r32>.

<sup>9</sup> Tessa Chelouche, and Geoffrey Brahmer, “Casebook on Bioethics and the Holocaust. Israel National Commission for UNESCO,” <http://www.unesco-chair-bioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Casebook-on-Bioethics-and-the-Holocaust.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Esteban González-López, and Rosa Ríos-Cortés, “Medical Students’ Opinions on Some Bioethical Issues Before and After a Holocaust and Medicine Course,” *Israeli Medical Association Journal* 21, no. 4 (2019): 298.

## II. Visiting Holocaust-related sites with medical students

Visiting authentic sites related to Medicine and the Holocaust creates a unique learning experience, far different from classroom study. Being present at the very places where awful medical experiments and actions took place has a particular meaning for medical students. Teaching and learning about Bioethics during a visit to Holocaust related sites has a huge impact on students and the way in which they understand medical ethics.<sup>11</sup> We organized two study trips (2013 and 2014) to Krakow and Auschwitz,<sup>12</sup> as well as a study trip to Holocaust and Nazi related sites in Germany, with the collaboration of two German universities.

### III. Description of the study trip to Holocaust related sites in Germany

We applied for and were awarded a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to design a study tour for a group of 15 medical students and two professors to various Holocaust and medicine related sites in Germany. The study tour (4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July 2017) included lectures at two universities (Heinrich Heine University at Düsseldorf and Berlin-Charité University), and a visit to the Memorial for the “*Euthanasia*” victims at Hadamar, accompanied by German medical students and their professors.

#### *i. Heinrich Heine University (Düsseldorf)*

Our trip started in the campus of Heinrich Heine University, visiting historical buildings such as the old church and the old pulmonary diseases pavilion. The students had the opportunity to learn about the organization of the hospital in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Professor Matthis Krischel delivered a lecture entitled: *Coming to terms with the past? Nazi medical crimes and their historical reflections in Germany*. The aim of the lecture was to consider how medical crimes committed by Nazi doctors have influenced present day medicine in Germany and all over the world.

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<sup>11</sup> Anthony S. Oberman, Tal Brosh-Nissimov, and Nachman Ash, “Medicine and the Holocaust: A Visit to the Nazi Death Camps as a Means of Teaching Medical Ethics in the Israel Defence Forces Medical Corps,” *Journal of Medical Ethics* 36, no. 12 (2010): 824-825.

<sup>12</sup> Esteban González-López, Rosa Ríos-Cortés, “Visiting Holocaust and Medicine-related Sites with Medical Students as an Aid in Teaching Medical Ethics,” *Israeli Medical Association Journal* 18, no. 5 (2016): 257-260.

ii. *Memorial to Victims of the Nazi Regime*<sup>13</sup> (Düsseldorf)

On the ruins of the former Nazi police headquarters, a memorial has been built for the remembrance of victims of Nazism that included people with disabilities. We had a guided visit to the exhibition: “*Düsseldorf’s children during the Nazi Regime*” which illustrates the stories of youth during the Nazi era in Düsseldorf. It was very shocking for the students to learn how propaganda can be used to create supporters of a totalitarian regime.

iii. *Hadamar Memorial Museum* (Hadamar)

The Hadamar State Psychiatric Hospital<sup>14</sup> was one of the five killing centers located in Germany, the others being Brandenburg, Bernburg, Graefeneck, and Pirna-Sonnenstein. At these sites doctors carried out the killing of 70,273 people with mental or physical disabilities. 10,072 people were murdered in Hadamar.

In October 1939 Hitler charged his Secretary Philip Bouhler, and his personal doctor, Karl Brandt, with the responsibility of carrying out what he called “*mercy killings*.” This was known as the *T4 Aktion*, after the Berlin office on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tiergarten Strasse, where criminal decisions were taken. Patients were transferred by bus (the so-called *Grey Buses*) to the killing centers where they were taken to gas chambers. Carbon monoxide was used to end their lives. The corpses were burnt and the ashes were sent to their relatives. Doctors were tasked with organizing the killings, checking the clinical records, opening the gas valves and signing false death certificates that stated death was due to common causes such as pneumonia, heart failure or appendicitis. Some corpses and organs were used for medical research.<sup>15</sup>

The killing of people in the gas chambers in the camps of Nazi-occupied Poland was key to the implementation of the so-called “*Final Solution of the Jewish problem*.” Doctors, their assistants and equipment were transferred to the death camps that included Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Chelmno, Sobibor and Belzec. Dr. Irmfried Eberl<sup>16</sup> is an example of the utilization of Nazi doctors in the State Racial policy. He was in charge of the Brandenburg killing facility

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de/en/art-culture/museums-and-more/museums/memorial-to-victims-of-the-nazi-regime/>.

<sup>14</sup> George Lilienthal, “Regional Psychiatric Clinic of Hadamar,” in *How Healing Becomes Killing. Eugenics. Euthanasia. Extermination*, eds. Ursula Ghering-Münzel, Marci Regan Dallas, and Ira D. Perry (Houston: Holocaust Museum Houston, 2007), 81.

<sup>15</sup> Yehuda Bauer, “Aktion T4/ ‘Euthanasia,’” in *Mass Murder of People with Disabilities and the Holocaust*, eds. Brigitte Bailer, and Juliane Wetzel, 19-24 (Berlin: Metropol Verlag & International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, 2019).

<sup>16</sup> Rael D. Strous, “Dr. Irmfried Eberl (1910-1948): Mass Murdering MD,” *Israeli Medical Association Journal* 11, no. 4 (2009): 216-218, 217.

and the first commander of the extermination camp in Treblinka. The murder of Jews started with the killing of disabled people in Germany and Austria, and the role of Nazi doctors was pivotal in the development of these actions.

Hitler decided to stop the *T4 Aktion* in 1941 after protests from the Catholic and Protestant Churches. However, the murder of people with other medical conditions continued, using methods including administering overdoses of drugs such as morphine, scopolamine and barbiturates or starving the victims.

Hadamar was also the final destination of civilians who experienced disorientation following air raids, German soldiers suffering from stress as a result of the war, and forced laborers from the Soviet Union and Poland who developed tuberculosis.

Today Hadamar<sup>17</sup> is a hospital that cares for psychiatric patients, as well as a museum, a memorial and a place of remembrance. We visited the remnants of the killing center (gas chamber, dissection room, and crematorium), the former bus garage for the so-called “*Grey Buses*,” the permanent exhibition, and we attended a workshop given by a member of the staff. At the end of the tour, we paid tribute to the victims.

A visit to a memorial located in an old killing centre is an occasion to reflect on the value of human life and think about how doctors collaborate with governments. Our students in their future practices may encounter situations in which they will be asked to obey laws that go against their ethical values. This portion of our trip helps prepare them for the possibility of such a situation.

#### *iv. Topography of Terror*<sup>18</sup> (Berlin)

The exhibition is located in the historic site where many central institutions of the Nazi state such as the Secret State Police Office (GESTAPO) and a prison were housed. They were the places where many criminal decisions were made. Our visit focused on the Nazi terror policy in Germany and its occupied territories. The group spent time, during the guided visit, considering the information on the exhibition’s panel dedicated to the killing of disabled people, the “so called” *T4 Aktion*.

#### *v. House of the Wannsee Conference*<sup>19</sup> (Berlin)

On January 20, 1942, a meeting of high-ranking SS functionaries and members of the Reich government took place in a magnificent villa in Berlin’s Wannsee

<sup>17</sup> Gedenkstätte Hadamar, “Hadamar Memorial: Memorial to the Victims of the Nazi-‘Euthanasia’-Crimes,” [http://www.gedenkstaette-hadamar.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-914/\\_nr-1/i.html](http://www.gedenkstaette-hadamar.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-914/_nr-1/i.html).

<sup>18</sup> Topographie des Terrors, “Topography of Terror Documentation Center,” <https://www.topographie.de/en/topography-of-terror/>.

<sup>19</sup> Haus der Wannsee Konferenz, “Der historische Ort / Die Gedenkstätte,” <http://www.ghwk.de/?lang=gb>.

district. Here the final details of the so-called “*The Final Decision to the Jewish Question*” were put together. Specifically, the deportation of European Jews to the ghettos and the concentration and extermination camps in Eastern Europe.

It was profoundly striking to visit a very quiet and beautiful place where a group of individuals took no more than one and a half hours to decide the sad fate of millions of people. We visited the exhibition and afterwards had a meeting and workshop with Dr. Elke Gryglewski, Deputy Director of the House of the Wannsee Conference Memorial and Educational Site. The topic was: *How does Germany deal with its own past and how does the memory of the victims and the acknowledgment of its own history play a central role in the German psyche in the present day?*

*vi. Museum of the History of Medicine at Charité<sup>20</sup> (Berlin)*

The Museum of the History of Medicine is located in the former building of the Pathological Institute in the Charité-School of Medicine. The exhibition shows several stages in the history of medicine and houses an impressive collection of human parts used for teaching in the faculty. The Director of the Museum, Professor Dr. Thomas Schnalke, gave us a lecture on German medicine before the Nazi era. Germany was the country where medicine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries made distinguished advancements. However, at the same time, it was the place where medicine showed its darkest face.

Walking to the museum, located in the University of Berlin-Charité Campus, we had the opportunity to talk to the students about the German doctors who were expelled from their positions in the University because they were Jews or political opponents or both.<sup>21</sup> For example, Dr. George Grosscurth<sup>22</sup> who, as a member of the German Resistance, was imprisoned and executed. There were others such as Dr. Herman Stieve, Professor of Anatomy in Charité, who conducted research using the corpses of 184 prisoners, mostly women, murdered by the Nazis. He studied the influence of stress on the female reproductive system.<sup>23</sup> Here two different approaches are demonstrated, Dr. George Grosscurth who decided to resist the Nazis and Dr. Stieve took advantage of the situation.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Berliner Medizinhistorisches Museum der Charité, <https://www.bmm-charite.de/en/index.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Charité Memorial Site, “Exclusion and Forced Displacement at the Charité: Persecuted Colleagues 1933–1945,” <https://gedenkort.charite.de/en/people/>.

<sup>22</sup> See [https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index\\_of\\_persons/biographie/view-bio/georg-grosscurth?no\\_cache=1](https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index_of_persons/biographie/view-bio/georg-grosscurth?no_cache=1).

<sup>23</sup> Andreas Winkelmann, and Udo Schagen, “Hermann Stieve’s Clinical-anatomical Research on Executed Women during the ‘Third Reich,’” *Clinical Anatomy* 22, no. 2 (2009): 163-171.

<sup>24</sup> Sabine Hildebrandt, “The Women on Stieve’s List: Victims of National Socialism Whose Bod-

*vii. Museum of Otto Weidt's Workshop for the Blind<sup>25</sup> and the Silent Heroes Memorial Center<sup>26</sup> (Berlin)*

It is important to note that despite the possibility of horrendous repercussions and punishments, some ordinary German men and women, during the National Socialist era, helped persecuted people such as Jews, prisoners of war and political opponents. Otto Weidt was the owner of a small factory that manufactured brushes and brooms. During World War II, he employed mainly blind and deaf Jews. They were protected because the Nazis considered these goods essential for the war effort. Today, Otto Weidt's old factory is a small snug museum, where visitors can see the artifacts made by the workers, together with images of people saved and their rescuers, the machinery, and the rooms used to hide the persecuted. Close to Otto Weidt's factory is the Silent Heroes Memorial Center, dedicated to ordinary people who decided to hide Jewish people during the Nazi era. These "silent heroes" provided Jews with fake identity cards, food and accommodation, and as a consequence, put themselves in great danger. They looked upon these Jews only as human beings who needed help. The exhibition contains the biographies of 241 German "silent heroes." Our students were tasked with searching for information on the helpers using the exhibition's computers and display panels.

*vii. Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp<sup>27</sup> (Berlin-Oranienburg).*

Located in Oranienburg, a town on the outskirts of Berlin, the camp was built in 1936 as a concentration camp for political opponents. More than 200,000 people were housed in this prison and became casualties of forced labor, punishments and hunger.

We visited the museum, the historic ruins and, in particular, the permanent exhibition "Medical Care and Crime – The Infirmary of Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp." Our guide was Dr. Astrid Ley, Deputy Head of the Sachsenhausen Memorial and curator of the exhibition. The exhibition is situated in the old infirmary, which was the ward where medical experiments took place. It is a large exhibition with display panels and artifacts giving

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ies Were Used for Anatomical Research," *Clinical Anatomy* 26, no. 1 (2013): 3-21.

<sup>25</sup> See <http://www.museum-blindenwerkstatt.de/en/first-of-all/>.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.museumsportal-berlin.de/en/museums/gedenkstatte-stille-helden/>. Recently the Silent Heroes Memorial Center has been moved to the German Resistance Memorial Center Foundation <https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/home/>.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.sachsenhausen-sbg.de/en/>.

visitors an insight into the different uses of the site during the Nazi era. Medical help was provided by the inmate doctors and their assistants, whilst the SS doctors only supervised some facets of care. The inmate doctors tried to care for people to the highest moral and professional standards, but with very limited resources.

We had the opportunity to see display panels and objects related to the Nazi Racial Policy which disclosed the eugenic measures inflicted on homosexuals, the disabled, and Sinti-Roma people. In one of the exhibition rooms, one of our students read the testimonies of Mr. Salomon Feldberg,<sup>28</sup> a victim of hepatitis research carried out by Dr. A. Dohmen. He was one of the 11 Jewish boys who were transferred from Auschwitz to Sachsenhausen to be used as guinea pigs in identifying the pathogens that caused the disease. Nazi doctors injected the boys with infected serum, and performed blood tests and liver biopsies on them.<sup>29</sup>

Our visit continued to other places in the concentration camp, such as the remnants of the gas chamber and the memorial to the victims. We also paid tribute to the 200 Spanish people who were deported to Sachsenhausen as political prisoners because of the parts they played in resisting the Nazis.

#### *ix. Memorials and places of remembrance (Berlin)*

Close to the Brandenburg Gate, memorials dedicated to the victims of Nazism and the Holocaust have been erected.

##### *a. Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe<sup>30</sup>*

This Memorial honors and remembers the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. It is an innovative monument consisting of 2,700 concrete slabs (the so-called *Field of Stelae*). At one end of the monument is the Memorial Center and the exhibition related to the genocide of European Jewish people. The display panels showing family portraits give victims an identity. This is a place to warn future generations to avoid any kind of discrimination and to protect Human Rights. We completed a guided tour of the open-air monument and the exhibition, after which we attended a workshop delivered by a member of the Memorial's staff.

<sup>28</sup> See <http://hernandobry.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/salomon-feldberg.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Astrid Ley, and Günther Morsch, "Medical Experiments in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp," in *Medical Care and Crime, The Infirmary at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp 1936-1945*, eds. Astrid Ley, and Günther Morsch, 338-361 (Berlin: Metropol, 2007).

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/the-memorial-to-the-murdered-jews-of-europe.html>.

b. Memorial to the homosexuals persecuted under the National Socialist regime<sup>31</sup>

Homosexuals were one of the groups that suffered from Nazi oppression, because they were considered as “socially aberrant.” Their organizations were banned when Hitler came to power. They were treated with extreme brutality, deported to concentration camps, sterilized and became victims of medical experiments attempting to identify the best method of changing their sexual orientation. Here we remembered the gay victims of Nazism and read the testimony of Mr. Otto Giering, a victim of compulsory castration.<sup>32</sup>

c. Memorial and information point for the victims of National Socialist “Euthanasia” killings<sup>33</sup>

On the historical site of the office of the *T4 Aktion*, a memorial was built to honor the disabled people murdered by the Nazi doctors. The killing of thousands of people with disabilities or classified as “socially undesirable” was the first systematic and medically supported crime carried out by the National Socialist regime. An easily accessible outdoor exhibition, without any fences or barriers presents information on the history of the so-called Euthanasia facilities, as well as on the victims, perpetrators and opponents. Here we read the testimony of Mr. Martin Bader,<sup>34</sup> a German shoemaker who suffered from Parkinson’s disease; designated a “useless eater” to use the Nazi jargon. He was transferred to Grafeneck where he was murdered in the gas chamber. It is important to recognize that behind every number there is always a person.

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<sup>31</sup> See <https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/memorial-to-the-homosexuals-persecuted-under-the-national-socialist-regime.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Astrid Ley, and Günther Morsch, “Compulsory Sterilization and Compulsory Castration,” in *Medical Care and Crime, The Infirmary at Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp 1936-1945*, eds. Astrid Ley, and Günther Morsch, 293-306 (Berlin: Metropol, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> See <https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/memorial-and-information-point-for-the-victims-of-national-socialist-euthanasia-killings.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Helmut Bader, “The Voice of the Victims and their Families: The Case of Martin Bader,” in *Silence, Scapegoats, Self-Reflection. The Shadow of Nazi Medical Crimes on Medicine and Bioethics*, eds. Etienne Lepicard, Volker Roelcke, and Sascha Topp (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014), 107-108.

d. Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe, murdered by the National Socialist regime<sup>35</sup>

The next stop of our visit to the memorials of Holocaust victims was the monument for Sinti-Roma people killed by the Nazis. Sinti-Roma were seen by the Nazis as “asocials” and “racially inferior.” They were victims of persecution and genocide by the Nazis and their collaborators in German-occupied Europe. They were deported, or murdered in their hometowns, or in ghettos, concentration camps or killing centers. Some estimates calculate that as many as 500,000 men, women and children were persecuted for being “Gypsies” and became victims of National Socialism. Sinti and Roma were also victims of medical experiments in Auschwitz and in some other camps.<sup>36</sup> At the memorial, we read the testimony of Mr. Hans Hoellenrainer,<sup>37</sup> a victim of salt-water medical experiments in Dachau concentration camp (Germany) and listened to the Romani Anthem “Gelem, Gelem.”<sup>38</sup>

x. *Additional visits*

In order to gain a better understanding of recent German History, we visited the East Side Gallery<sup>39</sup> independently. Also, we arranged a guided visit to the Berlin Wall Memorial.<sup>40</sup> As our trip lasted only seven days, the Professors encouraged the students to visit some other historical places and museums in Berlin such as: the Bundestag, the Pergamon and Bode Museum, DDR Museum, Stasi Museum, and the Royal Palace and Gardens in Potsdam, in their own time.

#### IV. Comments

Following the international recommendations for visiting Holocaust related sites,<sup>41</sup> we provided the students with educational material on the places to

<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.stiftung-denkmal.de/en/memorials/sinti-and-roma-memorial.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Weindling, “Targetting Victims: Gypsies,” in *Victims and Survivors of Nazi Human Experiments. Science and Suffering in the Holocaust*, ed. Paul Weindling (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> See <http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/transcripts/1-transcript-for-nmt-1-medical-case?seq=10657>.

<sup>38</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani\\_anthem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romani_anthem).

<sup>39</sup> See <http://www.eastsidegallery-berlin.com/data/eng/index-eng.htm>.

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de/en/>.

<sup>41</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Discover the Past for the Future. The Role of Historical Sites and Museums in Holocaust Education and Human Rights Education in the EU.” <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2010/discover-past-future-role-historical-sites-and-museums-holocaust-education-and>; International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, “Guidelines for Study Trips to Holocaust-Related Authentic and Non-Authentic Sites,” <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/node/141>; Council of Europe, “European Pack for

visit including concentration camps, historical sites, memorials and places of remembrance, as well as transcripts of victims' testimonies. Each of our visits always included a pedagogical activity such as a lecture or a workshop. The students were asked to personalize the victims and not merely think of them as a name or number. That is why, when viewing some of the exhibits in Berlin, we encouraged students to focus on an artifact or a photo, and try to imagine the life the owner had. We would like to make some suggestion to teachers who decide to visit Holocaust-related sites. It is essential that students are prepared emotionally and psychologically for the trip. It is also vital to meet every day before and after visiting each site. This enables the students to talk about their impressions and emotions, and thus express their feelings.

## V. Conclusion

We would like to say that we achieved all the goals we set for the program, additionally enhancing collaboration between German universities and our university. Our students had the opportunity to share impressions of some of the visits with German students. They socialized and talked to each other about their experiences and about the education systems in each other's countries. A follow-up activity for the Spanish students was designed by the Professors, using and sharing books, movies and other documents and resources related to Nazism and the Holocaust. Students were invited to share their experiences with their classmates. This has proved to be more powerful than any account given by the Professors.

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