



THE HOLOCAUST IN HISTORY AND MEMORY

VOL. 4 (2011)

THE PINK TRIANGLE:

THE LONG SHADOW OF THE NAZI PERSECUTION OF GAY MEN

TOTGESCHLAGEN
TOTGESCHWIEGEN
DEN
HOMOSEXUELLEN OPFERN
DES
NATIONALSOZIALISMUS

ALSO:

LEGACIES OF THE 'GYPSY'
AND THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST

EDITED BY
RAINER SCHULZE

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OVERLAPPING TRIANGLES:

Teaching the Interdependency of Holocaust Victimhoods*

DANNY M. COHEN, Northwestern University, Illinois

On 27 January 2005, Holocaust survivors and world leaders gathered at the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau to mark the 60th anniversary of the camp's liberation.¹ Days later, Polish and British journalists from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community reported that Polish authorities 'had barred representatives of the homosexual victims from attending the event.'² The Nazi regime incarcerated, castrated, sought to re-educate, and murdered thousands of German and Austrian homosexuals at Auschwitz and other camps.³ Yet, 'Homosexuals form the only group [...] whose representatives were not invited to participate' in this ceremony.⁴

* I would like to express my sincere thanks to Bernard Cherkasov, Elizabeth Lassner, Phyllis Lassner, Brian Reiser, Mia Spiro and Alexis Storch for their assistance and support with this article.

¹ 'World marks Auschwitz liberation', BBC News, 28 January 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4210841.stm> (accessed 10 March 2005).

² 'Gays hit out over lack of Holocaust Memorial Day recognition', *UK Gay News*, 9 February 2005, <http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/2005feb/0901.htm> (accessed 20 February 2005). – I use the term 'homosexual', as opposed to 'gay', to refer to the men the Nazis perceived as such because, unlike the term 'lesbian', 'gay' was not used to describe homosexuals during the Nazi period. I use the term 'gay' and the acronym LGBT when discussing more recent events to reflect that these terms were in use during these times. Additionally, I use the term 'LGBT community' to include the children of LGBT families as well as people who identify as community allies.

³ Giles (1992); Bergen (2003). – On the fact that mainly German and Austrian homosexual men were targeted, see Rainer Schulze's article in this volume, p. 29.

⁴ *Gazeta Wyborcza* as cited in 'Gays hit out over lack of Holocaust Memorial Day recognition' (note 2).

The exclusion of the LGBT community from the international commemoration of the Holocaust is worthy of attention for two reasons. First, this incident underscores the continued persecution around the world of LGBT people, as well as the continued oppression of certain other groups targeted by the Nazis.⁵ Second, the exclusion of the LGBT community from the ceremony in 2005 illustrates how the memorialisation of the Holocaust remains unresolved and complicates Holocaust commemoration, scholarship, and education. This compels us to re-examine how we remember, study and teach the Holocaust, and to consider the need for adapting Holocaust educational materials and programmes to reflect appropriately the interdependency of all Holocaust victimhoods.

Interdependency

Primo Levi recognises the need of educators to 'simplify' the Holocaust in order to support learners' understanding of history, arguing: 'What we commonly mean by "understand" coincides with "simplify": without a profound simplification the world around us would be an infinite, undefined tangle.'⁶ One such necessary simplification is the division of the victims of the Nazis into distinct groups.

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazi regime and its collaborators systematically targeted, sterilised, incarcerated, tortured, raped, subjected to pseudo-medical experimentation, and/or murdered millions of people whom they categorised under an array of real and perceived social, biological, racial, religious, and political groups, including people of African descent, alcoholics, asocials, Communists, criminals, dissenting Catholic and Lutheran clergy, the mentally and physically disabled, Freemasons, male homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, lesbians, pacifists, Poles, political dissidents, prostitutes, Roma and Sinti (or Gypsies), Slavic and Asiatic peoples of the Soviet Union, Soviet prisoners-of-war, and trade unionists.⁷ While Holocaust educators can present these victim groups as unconnected with one another, they are in fact inseparable.

The Idiosyncrasy of Identity

Educators must help learners understand that the experiences of Holocaust victims are interdependent because they represent millions of individuals. In reality, although the Nazis targeted particular groups of people for specific reasons and in particular ways, the identity of each individual was much more complex than the Nazis' categorisations may lead learners to believe. Individuals within each group targeted by the Nazis had idiosyncratic experiences; there

⁵ International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, 'Our issues', <http://www.iglhrc.org/cgi-bin/iowa/content/globalissues/index.html> (accessed 9 July 2011); Nicholas Kulish, 'As Economic Turmoil Mounts, So Do Attacks on Hungary's Gypsies', *The New York Times*, 26 April 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/27/world/europe/27hungary.html> (accessed 24 August 2010); Steven Erlanger, 'Expulsion of Roma raises questions in France', *The New York Times*, 19 August 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/20/world/europe/20france.html> (accessed 25 June 2011); Human Rights Watch (2011).

⁶ Levi (1988), p. 36.

⁷ Bergen (2003).

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was no uniform Jewish experience, no uniform homosexual experience, and so on.⁸ However, while every individual who lived and died under the Nazi regime had a personal and unique story, the fates of all victims, as Doris L. Bergen explains, 'were entwined in significant ways'.⁹ After all, regardless of how they identified or how the Nazis categorised them, many victims of the Holocaust shared the same fears and hopes, the same railcars and camps, and, Simon Wiesenthal reminds us, the same ovens and graves.¹⁰

The boundaries of discrete victimhoods are blurred by the shared fates of the individuals within them. The lines around persecuted groups are blurred even further when educators point out how Nazi policy dictated the categorisation of some individuals under multiple groups. For example, the Nazis labeled some men who were both Jewish and homosexual as such. In some concentration camps, the Nazis required these prisoners to wear a *rosa Winkel* (pink triangle) over a yellow triangle, creating a yellow and pink star.¹¹ Educators must support learners to see how the Nazis' policies of categorisation made it possible for an individual's multiple victimhoods to literally overlap.

Similarly, specific Nazi policies of so-called scientific experimentation and murder of children, policies of neglect and murder of the elderly, and policies of sterilisation, rape and murder of women illustrate how the regime's attention to age and gender dictated the form of pain of the individuals and their manner of death.¹² Importantly, educators must teach how, by the 1940s, the Nazis placed Jews at the centre of their system of categorisation (for example, Jewish political prisoners were singled out and Jewish women suffered particular fates), which underscores how the Nazis placed their beliefs about Jews at the centre of their ideology.¹³ Nevertheless, learners will come to perceive the interdependence of all victimhoods when they consider the complexities of the multiple identities of individuals and their corresponding experiences of suffering.

The complexities of Nazi ideology lead learners to acknowledge that we have come to perceive and place the personal stories of individuals into the narratives of simplified and isolated victim groups, partly because Nazi ideology necessitated a system of categorisation. This was a system that the Nazis sometimes subverted by purposely placing individuals into categories to which they may not have belonged. In his work on homosexuality under the *Reich*, Geoffrey J. Giles distinguishes between 'actual' and 'supposed' male homosexuals arrested under Paragraph 175 of the German penal code.¹⁴ For example, Catholic priests were sometimes 'conveniently eliminated through charges of homosexuality'.¹⁵ The Nazis highlighted aspects of

⁸ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (hereafter USHMM), 'Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust', www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/guideline/ (accessed 25 June 2011).

⁹ Bergen (2003), p. x.

¹⁰ From an interview with Wiesenthal conducted in 1979 by Michael Getler (Michael Getler, 'The Hunter's Remembrance', *Washington Post*, 1 April 1979), cited in Novick (1999), p. 215.

¹¹ Jensen (2002); USHMM, 'Classification system in Nazi concentration camps', <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005378> (accessed 24 November 2011).

¹² Ringelheim (2003); Baer and Goldenberg (2003).

¹³ Fritzsche (2008).

¹⁴ Giles (1992), p. 43.

¹⁵ Aretha (2000), p. 108.

their prisoners' identities while overlooking – intentionally or unintentionally – other aspects. When, for example, a Holocaust encyclopedia states that '[a]n estimated 5,000 to 15,000 homosexuals perished behind barbed-wire fences during the Holocaust'¹⁶, we must be mindful that the Nazi camps undoubtedly contained and consumed numerous Jews, Sinti, communists etc., who were also homosexuals. Consequently, the interdependency of victimhoods is exposed further when we consider that estimates of 5,000 to 15,000 homosexuals killed by the Nazi regime include those men who did not identify as homosexual just as they exclude homosexual men and women whom the Nazis murdered for other reasons.

Educators must help learners to identify the Nazis' use of sub-categories within target groups. The Nuremberg Laws, which defined who was a Jew, represent a set of categorisations that did not reflect the identities of some individuals. A part of these laws separated 'full Jews' from Jews of 'mixed blood,' known as *Mischlinge*.¹⁷ Consequently, '[s]ome *Mischlinge* who had no contact with Judaism or Jews [...] ended up being treated as Jews.'¹⁸ This is especially significant, as some *Mischlinge* and even some 'full Jews' did not identify themselves as Jewish. Nor would many parts of the Jewish community have considered certain *Mischlinge* and certain 'full Jews' as Jewish.¹⁹

Rather than allowing definitions of the Nazis dictate descriptions of Holocaust victims, educators must help learners to use precise language that reflects the realities of victims' lives.²⁰ To say that the Nazis targeted and murdered Jews and homosexuals is too simplistic; our language must reflect how the Nazis sought to annihilate all people of Jewish descent, including those who did not identify as Jewish, and incarcerate and re-educate German and Austrian men whom they considered to be homosexual, including those who were not.

The unique experiences and real identities of individual Holocaust victims blur the boundaries amongst the victim groups. This further underscores the interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods and has significant pedagogical implications. Holocaust educators should '[s]how that individual people [...] are behind the statistics and emphasize that within the larger historical narrative is a diversity of personal experience.'²¹ By highlighting the interdependency and complexities of Holocaust victimhoods, educators will be able to 'portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims.'²²

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Engel (2000), p. 33.

¹⁸ Bergen (2003), p. 74.

¹⁹ Donin (1972). – The Nuremberg Laws defined as a 'full Jew' any person with at least three Jewish grandparents. This means that the Nazi regime would have considered an individual who had three Jewish grandparents, but whose mother and maternal grandmother were not Jewish, regardless of how such an individual self-identified, as a 'full Jew.' As Orthodox Jewish *Halacha* (religious law) defines only people with a Jewish mother as Jewish, the Orthodox Jewish community, regardless of how this individual self-identified, would not have considered this person to be Jewish (unless she or he had converted to Orthodox Judaism).

²⁰ USHMM, 'Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust' (note 8).

²¹ Bergen (2004), p. 46; USHMM, 'Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust' (note 8).

²² Ibid.

Moreover, by considering the complex identities of Holocaust victims, learners may be more likely to avoid 'setting up destructive hierarchies of suffering' and unfair 'comparisons of pain' amongst the targeted groups.²³ By teaching about the complex identities of the Nazis' victims, educators are able to challenge learners' assumptions about all victims of discrimination and oppression around the world today. When, for example, learners apply the lessons of the Holocaust to the current government-sponsored violence and murder of LGBT people around the world, the interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods can remind them to consider the victims of such persecution as complex individuals persecuted because of a single aspect – or perceived aspect – of their identities. When educators oversimplify the Nazi system of categorisation, they encourage learners to ignore the overlapping groupings and sub-categories of victims that would otherwise support consideration of the more complex identities of Holocaust victims, as well as the Nazis' broader plan for its so-called Aryan race.

The Intentions of the Perpetrators

Educators should highlight the problems of using perpetrator categories and terminologies to talk and write about Holocaust victims, as well as prevent learners from comparing the suffering of individuals or groups.²⁴ There is value, however, in supporting learners to chart why and how the Nazis persecuted real and perceived social, cultural, ethnic, biological, religious and political groups. Noticing differences and commonalities amongst victimhoods sheds light on the Nazi goals of perpetuating their so-called Aryan society.²⁵ When learners pay attention to the interdependency of victimhoods, they are able to see that 'one cannot explain any one of these Nazi killing operations without explaining the others.'²⁶ Educators must stress how the Nazi regime used numerous, simultaneous, cumulative systems to persecute their different targets, such as propaganda and political rhetoric, the creation of oppressive laws, the amendment of existing laws, physical segregation through ghettoisation and deportations to concentration camps, and carefully tested and coordinated methods of mass murder.

Additionally, educators must help learners to recognise that the genocidal and oppressive ideologies of the Nazis went beyond the targeting of people; the Nazis sought to extinguish any culture seen to counter their goals of a pure Aryan society. On 10 May 1933, the Nazis burned Jewish books, Communist literature and sexual science research conducted by Magnus Hirschfeld, himself Jewish and homosexual.²⁷ They closed down meeting places considered to be *non*-Aryan, including gay and lesbian bars and cafés, all the while seeking to destroy Jewish books, artefacts, and synagogues.²⁸ The bonfires that consumed these materials all at once foreshadowed the entwined fates of the people by whom and about whom they were written.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.; Bergen (2004).

²⁵ Johnson and Rittner (1996).

²⁶ Friedlander (1995), p. 295.

²⁷ Plant (1986), p. 16; USHMM (2007), p. 44.

²⁸ Bergen (2003).

While the Nazis targeted various groups simultaneously, they placed at the centre of their ideology their hatred of and plan to destroy all Jewish people and Jewish culture.²⁹ These beliefs and intentions were made clear in Hitler's early anti-Semitic writings and, later, in Nazi rhetoric and propaganda through which the Jews were scapegoated and defamed.³⁰ Yet, the Jews were not the only group to feature in the Nazis' incriminations of Germany's ills. For example, on 18 February 1937, the *Reichsführer* SS Heinrich Himmler delivered a speech in which he 'explicitly linked homosexuality to the fate of the nation, saying, "A people of good race which has too few children has a one-way ticket to the grave."' ³¹ Furthermore, Nazi propaganda sometimes conflated warnings about the devastating impact of different groups on society. For example, 'a filmstrip of the Reich Propaganda Office titled *The Terrible Legacy of an Alcoholic Woman* [...] claims that in 83 years, [she] produced 894 descendants [...] including 40 paupers, 67 habitual criminals, 7 murderers, 181 prostitutes, and 142 beggars.'³² To the Nazis, all these people threatened their master race.

Furthermore, learners can begin to grasp the complexity of Nazi ideology and therefore the interdependency of victimhoods when they consider the regime's perversion of German law to suppress its political opponents, enact policies against particular social, biological and racial groups, and carry out its atrocities. While the Nazis incarcerated and executed their political opponents, they considered the mentally and physically disabled as biologically flawed, homosexuals as mentally and behaviourally defective, and people of Jewish, Roma, Sinti, Polish, Slavic or African descent as racially inferior.³³ In the first weeks of the Nazi era, to suppress his opposition, 'Hitler [...] persuaded President von Hindenburg to issue a decree that suspended German constitutional provisions guaranteeing basic individual rights, including freedom of speech, assembly, and the press.'³⁴ In 1935, the Nazis tightened Paragraph 175 of the German penal code, which had criminalised male homosexuality since 1871, to justify legally the closure of homosexual establishments.³⁵ That same year, they created the Nuremberg Laws to define and oppress people with a Jewish bloodline and, although the laws did not explicitly refer to non-Jews, the Nazis later interpreted and applied them to people of Sinti, Roma or African descent.³⁶

While educators can emphasise that the manipulation of German law by the Nazis connects Holocaust victimhoods, they can also stress how the Nazi regime perceived many of its target groups as intrinsically linked. For example, the Nazis saw Jehovah's Witnesses as allies of the Jews. While the Nazi regime persecuted Jehovah's Witnesses for their refusal to pledge allegiance to Nazism and serve in the military, they also persecuted them for their beliefs about the Jews' divine connection to the Holy Land.³⁷ Similarly, Hitler linked people of African and Jewish

²⁹ Engel (2000).

³⁰ Crowe (2008).

³¹ USHMM (2007), p. 39. – On Himmler's speech, see also Rainer Schulze's article in this volume, pp. 17–18 and 23.

³² Bergen (2003), p. 64.

³³ Bergen (2003).

³⁴ USHMM (2007), p. 26.

³⁵ Bergen (2003).

³⁶ USHMM (2007), pp. 91 and 100.

³⁷ Ibid.

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⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Ibid

descent, claiming that the 'Jews [...] bring the Negroes into the Rhineland always with the [...] clear aim of ruining the hated white race by the necessarily resulting bastardization'.³⁸ Such perceived relationships go beyond the regime's practice of categorising individuals under multiple victim groups. The fact that the fate of different victim groups was entwined is supported by the Nazi obsession that their different target groups were conspiring against them.

The full extent of the Nazis' ideologies and intentions reveal clear connections amongst victimhoods. Just as the Nazis perceived people of Jewish, African, Roma or Sinti descent as threats to Aryan society, they considered homosexuality not only as a defective mental and behavioural state but also as a threat to their race.³⁹ The Nazi regime did not target homosexuals across Europe; they only applied Paragraph 175 to support the arrest and deportation of suspected homosexuals within the Reich.⁴⁰ This mirrors the regime's ban against so-called Aryan women to obtain abortions, in order to protect and advance the procreation of their master race.⁴¹ In fact, in 1936 the Nazis linked homosexuality and abortion through the establishment of the Reich Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion (*Reichszentrale zur Bekämpfung der Homosexualität und Abtreibung*).⁴² Furthermore, the belief of the Nazis that Aryan women needed to fulfill the 'primary role of giving birth to as many German babies as possible' was linked to their ideas that 'lesbians could be used as breeders regardless of their own feelings'.⁴³ In fact, 'the lives of lesbians were shaped less by official Nazi homophobia than by the regime's marginalisation of women in general, and its contempt for female sexuality'.⁴⁴ Such policies and attitudes reveal how the Nazis' beliefs about their victims converged. As Bergen argues, 'Hitler's sexism and antisemitism were mutually reinforcing [...] he equated feminists with Jews and derided Jewish men as defilers of Aryan womanhood and champions of homosexuality and other supposed perversions'.⁴⁵

Asking learners to plot out how the Nazis perceived and treated each group provides context for and enhances comprehension of how the Nazis perceived all others. For example, the Nazis' belief that they could find a cure for homosexuality contextualises their contrasting belief that being Jewish, Roma, Sinti or African was incurable.⁴⁶ Those beliefs in turn shed light on how, after attempting to find remedies for various medical conditions, the Nazis concluded that people with disabilities did not deserve to live.⁴⁷ While the Nazis gassed physically and mentally disabled Germans and Austrians through their so-called euthanasia programme, their policy towards German and Austrian homosexual men was one of so-called re-education, including hard labour and castration.⁴⁸ The torture of homosexual men contextualises the Nazi perception

³⁸ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Bergen (2003).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ USHMM (2007), p. 44; Müller (1994), p. 11.

⁴⁴ Müller (1994), p. 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

⁴⁶ Bergen (2003).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

of lesbians as a relatively low threat to the regime's objectives.⁴⁹ By considering the different policies of the Nazis for homosexuals and the disabled, learners can begin to map out the Nazi perceptions of and plans for people they identified as Jewish, Sinti and Roma. The gassing of the disabled, as well as the use of Zyklon B to murder Soviet prisoners-of-war, became a testing ground for the efficient mass murder by gas of the Jews, Sinti and Roma that followed and illustrates how 'euthanasia' was not simply a prologue but the first chapter of Nazi genocide.⁵⁰

By examining the discriminatory and genocidal policies and actions of the Nazis against each of their target groups, learners can see clearly that different Holocaust victimhoods rely on one another to be understood. By placing side-by-side the beliefs, policies and actions of the Nazis toward different groups of people, learners can begin to distinguish amongst those actions and policies motivated by the need to control the masses, those driven by eugenics and deep-rooted xenophobic beliefs, and those led by both motives at the same time. Learners can also ascertain how and why particular Nazi beliefs led to particular Nazi policies, which in turn led to particular Nazi decisions and actions.

Furthermore, mapping out the different beliefs, policies and actions of the Nazis against each of their victim groups will help learners identify patterns amongst the beliefs and actions of perpetrators within contemporary cases of genocide and oppression. For example, when learners apply Holocaust history's lessons to contemporary government-sponsored violence and murder of minorities, the interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods can prompt learners to pay attention to how different governments' reasons for persecuting specific groups lead them to pass particular laws and to oppress each group in specific ways.

International Response

The interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods is accentuated further when educators encourage learners to examine the response – and lack of response – of the international community to the intensifying violence of the Nazi regime. In 1939, representatives from 32 countries, led by US President Roosevelt, convened at Evian-les-Bains in France to discuss the escalating number of Jewish people trying to flee Germany and recently annexed Austria.⁵¹ The focus of this meeting on the Jewish plight mirrored the centrality of the Jews in Nazi ideology and rhetoric. Yet, importantly, while Hitler appeared to be making it easier at this time for Jews to leave the Reich, the Nazis had already sterilised German people of African descent and people with mental disabilities, and had already deported homosexuals, political opponents, so-called asocials and Sinti and Roma to various camps.⁵² There was no equivalent of the Evian Conference for the Nazis' non-Jewish victims at the international level.⁵³ At the same time, just as only one country (the Dominican Republic) agreed to take in Jewish refugees, the lack of international discussion about helping the other groups targeted by the Nazis may have reflected

⁴⁹ USHMM (2007), p. 44.

⁵⁰ Bergen (2003); Engel (2000); Friedlander (1995), p. xii.

⁵¹ USHMM (2007), p. 125.

⁵² Bergen (2003).

⁵³ Ludi (2006).

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the world's inability to do so or, more cynically, its indifference to their suffering.⁵⁴ For example, a lack of international advocacy on behalf of the Nazis' homosexual targets might be explained by the concurrent state-sponsored persecution of homosexuals across the globe.

While the international community met to discuss the plight of the Jews under the Reich, its actual failure to help them – or anyone else – further underscores the interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods. When educators encourage learners to question how and why the world did little to help the victims of the Nazis, learners have the opportunity to reflect upon the broader implications of international bystanderism toward different minority groups. When learners become aware that an international conference about the Jewish plight took place while an equivalent meeting about the Nazis' homosexual targets was not even considered, they could be led to ask important questions about political passageways to advocacy in the face of current genocide and oppression. Relatedly, educators can highlight the interdependency of victimhoods to address how some individuals risked their lives to help the Nazis' victims and so lead learners to ask questions about their own actions against injustice today.⁵⁵

To summarise, educators must help learners understand that Holocaust victimhoods are connected through the idiosyncrasies of the experiences and identities of the individual victims, are bound by the Nazis' attempts to perpetuate a master race, and are entwined by the responses of the international community to the brutalities of the Nazi regime. Furthermore, the victims are inextricably linked by the abstracted pedagogical lessons – about prejudice, bystanderism, etc. – imbued in the single narrative formed by their interdependency. However, mainstream Western society's conceptions of Holocaust history overlook this interdependency.

The Separation of Holocaust Victimhoods

Peter Novick compares the American public's perception of Nazism during the Holocaust with the public perception of the regime decades later, setting out that during the Nazi era 'Jews were, quite reasonably, seen as among but by no means as the singled-out victims of the Nazi regime.'⁵⁶ An examination of reports throughout the war in *The New York Times* and *The Times*, London, show that the international press sometimes reported on the different victim groups of the Nazis separately and sometimes in an integrated way, but often ignored victim group identities altogether, instead referring to them in vague, general terms, such as 'prisoners'.⁵⁷ Yet, Novick argues, modern-day conceptions of Nazi atrocities place the Jewish victims 'at the center,' and non-Jewish victims 'at the periphery' of Holocaust history.⁵⁸ In the decades that followed the

⁵⁴ USHMM (2007), p. 126.

⁵⁵ While much has been written about people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Nazi era, with the exception of research about protests against the euthanasia programme (see Friedlander, 1995), little appears to have been written about people who risked their lives to save non-Jewish victims.

⁵⁶ Novick (1999), p. 21.

⁵⁷ 'Gypsies and warnings', *The Times*, 28 December 1939, p. 11; 'Cramm sentenced to a year in prison: He was a blackmail victim', *The New York Times*, 15 May 1938, p. 26; 'Atrocity report issues by army: At two of the horror camps liberated by the allies', *The New York Times*, 29 April 1945, p. 20; Charles E. Egan, 'All Reich to see camp atrocities: Allies will billboard scenes in each community to teach Germans they have guilt', *The New York Times*, 24 April 1945, p. 6.

⁵⁸ Novick (1999), p. 225.

Holocaust, the public understood that Jews made up the largest group murdered while comprising approximately half of all the Nazis' victims.⁵⁹ However, by 1979, in arguing against those who supported 'dividing the victims' of Nazism, Wiesenthal warned that throughout the post-war era, the writers of Holocaust history had 'reduced the problem to one between Nazis and Jews.'⁶⁰

In teaching the development of Holocaust commemoration, educators have the opportunity to draw attention to Holocaust historiography and support learners to question how histories in general are constructed.⁶¹ Educators can help learners understand how a series of factors and events created a climate in which mainstream Western society has come to conceive each of the Nazis' victim groups as distinct and separate from each other.

Legal Recognition and Ongoing Persecution

Starting at the moment of liberation, the inconsistent handling of the Nazis' different victim groups by the post-war European and American governments set in motion the division and isolation of victimhoods. As the details of the Nazi atrocities became known, the establishment of displaced persons camps across Europe by the Allies for well over 100,000 Jewish survivors reflected a degree of sympathy from the international community toward the devastated Jewish community and presented a solution to the escalating Jewish refugee crisis.⁶²

However, the world's response to the Jewish survivors of Nazism differed from its response to other victim groups. For example, political pressure, prevailing anti-Semitism throughout Europe, and the sheer number of refugees forced countries around the world to take in Jewish survivors, but 'Gypsies who had managed to live through the Nazi assault were no more welcome in many places after May 1945 than they had been before or during the war.'⁶³ In the early years of the post-war period, West Germany granted Jewish survivors some reparations and supported efforts to reunify Jewish families. At the same time, however, 'the Roma and the handicapped had no common voice or defenders, and they failed in their efforts to gain recognition in the courts for their suffering.'⁶⁴

Just as authorities denied reparations to Sinti and Roma and to disabled survivors, petitions of homosexual survivors for reparations were also rejected.⁶⁵ It is not surprising that the treatment of homosexual survivors by the Allies was unsympathetic, considering anti-homosexuality laws throughout the world. In a particularly harsh decision, '[t]he Allied occupation forces required some homosexual survivors of Nazism to serve out their terms of imprisonment regardless of

⁵⁹ Novick (1999), p. 214. – In chapter 10, Novick discusses in detail the development in the American public psyche of the numbers 6 million and 11 million victims of the Holocaust.

⁶⁰ From an interview with Wiesenthal conducted in 1979 by Michael Getler (note 10).

⁶¹ Curthoys and Docker (2005); Curthoys (2005).

⁶² Bergen (2003).

⁶³ Ibid., p. 223.

⁶⁴ Crowe (2008), p. 384.

⁶⁵ Crowe (2008); Jensen (2002).

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time spent in concentration camps.⁶⁶ Other German and Austrian homosexuals were freed from the Nazi camps and prisons 'only to be arrested again and incarcerated under old or new laws that criminalized homosexuality.'⁶⁷ While most of the Nazi discriminatory legislation, such as the Nuremberg Laws, was immediately abolished by the Allies, the anti-homosexuality law Paragraph 175 as revised and amended by the Nazis in 1935 remained in force in occupied Germany.⁶⁸

In the post-war world, not only did the international community fail to recognise homosexuals as victims of Nazi persecution, many Western governments continued to harass, arrest and incarcerate their homosexual citizens.⁶⁹ This was reflected further by the omission of sexual orientation, or any other analogous term, as a protected category within the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.⁷⁰ The East and West German governments continued to apply Paragraph 175 to arrest gay men throughout the 1950s and 1960s.⁷¹ In 1969, with the resurgence of the gay rights movement, Paragraph 175 was amended in West Germany, and homosexuality was decriminalised for men over 21 years of age, an action mirrored at the same time by a number of countries around the world.⁷²

Paragraph 175 was not formally abolished until 1994, and the German government did not recognise or pardon the Nazis' homosexual victims and survivors until May 2002, some 57 years after the liberation of the camps.⁷³ This mirrors West Germany's refusal to recognise or offer reparations to Sinti and Roma victims of Nazism until 1982.⁷⁴ The deferred full repeal of Paragraph 175 and the delayed recognition of homosexuals as victims of the Nazi regime echoed the continued persecution of LGBT people. Likewise, denials of reparations for the Sinti and Roma and disabled survivors foreshadowed the sustained persecution of these groups in Europe in the twenty-first century, such as the Roma communities in Hungary and France, and people with intellectual and mental disabilities in Croatia.⁷⁵

While the LGBT community has struggled for the recognition of the Nazis' homosexual victims, several religious leaders, in overt homophobia, accused it of exploiting the Holocaust for its own gains. For example, in 1997, the Orthodox Rabbi Yehuda Levin filed a lawsuit to oppose the inclusion of the Nazis' homosexual victims at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York,

⁶⁶ USHMM (2007), p. 49.

⁶⁷ Bergen (2003), p. 223.

⁶⁸ USHMM (2007), p. 49. – On Paragraph 175, see also Rainer Schulze's article in this volume, esp. pp. 30–2.

⁶⁹ Miller (1995).

⁷⁰ United Nations, 'The Universal Declaration of Human Rights', 10 December 1948, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/> (accessed 10 July 2011).

⁷¹ Bergen (2003). – In the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) Paragraph 175 was applied in the pre-1935 version. In the new GDR criminal code of 1968 it became Paragraph 151; this paragraph was abolished without replacement in 1989, a year before unification with West Germany. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) retained the 1935 version of Paragraph 175 until 1969.

⁷² Jensen (2002). – A notable exception was the United States; the US Supreme Court decriminalised homosexuality only in 2003.

⁷³ USHMM (2007), p. 50.

⁷⁴ USHMM (2007).

⁷⁵ Kulish, 'As Economic Turmoil Mounts, So Do Attacks on Hungary's Gypsies' (note 5); Steven Erlanger, 'Expulsion of Roma raises questions in France', *The New York Times*, 19 August 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/20/world/europe/20france.html> (accessed 25 June 2011); Human Rights Watch (2011).

asserting, 'we [...] don't want to see homosexuality elevated to the martyred status of the six million Jews [...] There's a world of difference between being incarcerated for one's religion and being incarcerated for one's bedroom misbehavior.'⁷⁶ Similarly, in 2008, to coincide with Europe's Holocaust Memorial Day, Joseph Devine, the Catholic Bishop of Motherwell, Scotland, 'accused the gay community of leading a "conspiracy" against Christianity by allying itself with Holocaust survivors [...] to gain persecuted status.'⁷⁷ The LGBT community has been accused of jumping on the Holocaust bandwagon, as if the Nazis' policies and actions against homosexuals were trivial.⁷⁸

Educators have a responsibility to help learners understand that the inconsistent treatment of different victim groups after the Nazi period has led to mainstream perceptions of Holocaust victimhoods as disconnected. Furthermore, learners must come to see that continued persecution of so-called liberated survivors of oppression has profound effects on how those people come to be included in – or excluded from – the commemoration of and education about human suffering.

Memory and Representation

Understandably and without prejudice, different communities have commemorated their own losses in different and specific ways through the creation of mnemonic artefacts and routines.⁷⁹ Such artefacts include monuments, museums, literature and film. Routines include public ceremonies and days of remembrance, community rituals and recurring curricula in classrooms and community settings.

In 1942, the Jewish National Fund discussed the idea of a memorial in British-mandated Palestine to the Jewish victims of Nazism and 'of the participation of the Jewish people in the Allied armies.'⁸⁰ At the end of the war in Europe, when 'the full extent of the catastrophe was revealed', the Jewish National Council and the Jewish National Institutions recommended a memorial complex that would include:

[...] a center in Jerusalem [...] a registry of [victims'] names [...] a memorial tower in honor of all the Jewish fighters against the Nazis [...] a permanent exhibit on the concentration and extermination camps [...] memorial forests and the building of educational institutions for the children of the survivors.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Robert L. Pela, 'Taking the triangle out of the star', *The Advocate*, 9 December 1997, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1589/is_n748/ai_20088653 (accessed 6 December 2007).

⁷⁷ Joanna Sugden, 'Bishop accuses gays of "conspiracy" against the Catholic Church', *The Times*, 13 March 2008, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article3545414.ece> (accessed 9 September 2008).

⁷⁸ Tony Marco, 'The "Homosexual Holocaust": Another gay militant myth?', 1994, <http://www.leaderu.com/marco/special/spc16.html> (accessed 16 March 2005).

⁷⁹ Zerubavel (1997).

⁸⁰ 'Yad Vashem: A brief history', http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_yad/jubilee/history_Brief.html (accessed 7 July 2011).

⁸¹ Ibid. – The Jewish National Fund (JNF), established in 1901, is a Zionist organisation that today works to protect the environment in Israel. During the Holocaust, in addition to chronicling the Nazis' persecution of European Jewry, JNF worked toward the establishment of a Jewish state in response to anti-Semitism around the world, <http://www.jnf.org/about-jnf/history/> (accessed 25 November 2011).

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These ideas developed into Yad Vashem, The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority, established in Jerusalem by the Israeli Knesset in 1953.

Learners can appreciate the Jewish people's dedication to preserving and teaching its history to its children when they consider how Jewish people during the Nazi period, in Europe and around the world, diligently recorded the impact of Nazi persecution on Jewish life. Jewish community leaders in the ghettos buried milk-cans and other capsules full of objects and testimonies recounting Jewish life and suffering. The Jewish children in the ghettos and in hiding expressed their experiences and responses through paintings and in diaries. As early as 1946, a consortium of Jewish organisations published *The Black Book: The Nazi Crime against the Jewish People*, a chronicle including Jewish population levels across Europe before and after the war, details of the deportations and mechanisms of murder, and accounts of Jewish resistance.⁸² Immediately after the war, Jewish survivors began to record – in writing, on tape and on film – their memories of their experiences in Nazi camps, in partisan groups, and in hiding.

The abilities of the Jewish community to gather evidence and record testimonies of persecution contrast with the lack of opportunities for homosexual survivors of Nazism to speak out about their experiences. Klaus Müller asks: 'Why have so few gay Holocaust survivors come forward to describe their ordeals?'⁸³ The Nazi regime's treatment of homosexuals was certainly known; indeed, Nazi documents detailed the incarceration and deaths of homosexuals, the experimentation they were subjected to, while camp liberators and Jewish survivors occasionally talked of witnessing the treatment of homosexuals in the camps.⁸⁴ However, continued hostility toward homosexuals in Europe – and everywhere else – prevented individual victims from telling and recording their stories. As Müller explains, homosexual survivors did not speak out because they 'lived in continual fear of being arrested.'⁸⁵ Even after Western governments decriminalised homosexuality, many gay survivors of Nazism were reluctant to speak openly, as depicted in the documentary film *Paragraph 175* and reflected by only six testimonies by 'Homosexual Survivors' of the total 51,219 testimonies collected by the Shoah Foundation Institute at the University of Southern California.⁸⁶

Jewish life is imbued with the community's consciousness of overcoming persecution. Yet, the Jewish quip, 'they tried to kill us, we won, let's eat!' – reflected in the joyous festivals of *Pesach* (Passover), *Purim* and *Chanukah*⁸⁷ – did not fit the community's horrific and recent encounters with the Nazis' gay chambers and pits. In Holocaust commemoration there could

⁸² The Jewish Black Book Committee (1946). The committee comprised: World Jewish Congress; Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, USSR; Vaad Leumi, Palestine; and the American Committee of Jewish Writers, Artists, and Scientists.

⁸³ Müller (1994), p. 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 8.

⁸⁶ Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education, University of Southern California (USC), Los Angeles, 'Testimony Catalog', [http://tc.usc.edu/vhitec/\(S\(nudz32bpw1ewijygnijerfc\)\)/menu.aspx](http://tc.usc.edu/vhitec/(S(nudz32bpw1ewijygnijerfc))/menu.aspx) (accessed 9 July 2011). For more on the documentary film *Paragraph 175* see further down, p. 55.

⁸⁷ Donin (1972). – The festivals of *Pesach* (Passover), *Purim* and *Chanukah* all entail celebrating Jewish survival: *Pesach* signifies the Israelites' freedom from slavery in ancient Egypt; *Purim* marks the failed attempt of ancient Persia to murder its Jewish population; and *Chanukah* commemorates the divine miracles of light following the ancient Greek siege and desecration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.

be no feasts, no jubilant songs, no prizes for children. Consequently, parts of the Jewish community found a place for its trauma of the Holocaust within existing religious commemorative rituals, including solemn prayers, such as the communal *Kaddish* and *Yizkor* prayers of mourning and remembrance, and *Tisha B'Av*, the annual fast day for commemorating Jewish suffering.⁸⁸ Additionally, in 1959, *Yom HaShoah*, meaning 'The Holocaust Day', was added to the Israeli and Jewish calendars as a separate day of mourning.⁸⁹ By this time, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and its theatrical version *The Diary of Anne Frank* had already made their way into the public psyche.⁹⁰ Israel's hunting down and trial of high-ranking Nazi Adolf Eichmann in the early 1960s pushed conversations about the responses of the Jewish state to the murder of the Jews by the Nazi regime into the mainstream.

In 1963, one decade after its establishment, Yad Vashem embarked on recording and honouring non-Jewish individuals who had risked their lives to save 'one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps.'⁹¹ Holocaust education guidelines encourage educators to teach about these individuals – usually referred to as the Righteous Among the Nations – to help learners reflect on the significance of how 'those who rescued Jews during the Holocaust demonstrated the possibility of individual choice even in extreme circumstances.'⁹² Yet, there appears to be no equivalent project through which researchers have recorded and honoured individuals who saved Roma, Sinti, homosexuals and other non-Jewish targets of the Nazi regime. While individual educators can choose to research and teach about such cases, the fact that Holocaust educational and commemorative programmes emphasise people who saved Jews and neglect to include people who saved non-Jews serves to perpetuate the false notion that Jewish and non-Jewish victim narratives are unrelated. Moreover, the marginalisation of these narratives of the Holocaust – the stories of people who saved non-Jews may well include Jewish rescuers – have impacted how the Holocaust has come to be remembered.

Eric Jensen tracks the development of the LGBT community's distinct collective memory of Nazi persecution, explaining how '[a] very few individuals had written in the immediate postwar period about the Nazi persecution of homosexuals, but their work had little impact on the consciousness of homosexuals or of the wider public.'⁹³ It was not until the late 1960s that writings and research on the Nazi persecution of homosexuals emerged quietly into the public's

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 304–10. – *Kaddish* (literally 'holy'), although it makes no reference to death or mourning, is a public prayer traditionally recited by mourners at Jewish funerals, throughout the 11-month period of mourning after a loved one's death, and on subsequent anniversaries. *Yizkor* (literally 'remembrance') is a communal prayer for the dead that is traditionally recited in synagogue during Jewish holiday services.

⁸⁹ Yad Vashem, 'Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day Law 5719–1959', http://www.knesset.gov.il/shoah/eng/shoah_memorialday_eng.pdf (accessed 10 July 2011).

⁹⁰ Frank (1952). Originally published in 1947 in Dutch under the title *Het Achterhuis: Dagboekbrieven van 12 juni 1942 – 1 Augustus 1944* [The Annex: Diary Notes from 12 June 1942 – 1 August 1944] (Amsterdam: Contact Publishing, 1947), first English translation in 1952 under the title *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. The American dramatists and screenwriters Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett adapted the book for the stage; the play opened on Broadway in 1955.

⁹¹ Yad Vashem, 'The righteous among the nations', <http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/faq.asp#1> (accessed 2 October 2011).

⁹² USHMM, 'Rescue', <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005185> (accessed 2 October 2011).

⁹³ Jensen (2002), p. 323.

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⁹⁴ Ibid., p.

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consciousness. The gay rights movement used this new research to explain the need for acceptance of gay and lesbian people; if the gay and lesbian community could educate the public that they, too, had been victims during the Holocaust, then perhaps the world would sympathise with their need for equal rights.⁹⁴ A consummate example of the LGBT community's attempts to speak out about their victimhood under Nazism was the emergence in the 1970s of the pink triangle into the public domain as a sign of gay and lesbian suffering, survival and pride.⁹⁵

By the 1970s, as the LGBT community was just beginning to remember the Nazis' homosexual victims – albeit in the absence of ample survivor testimony –, dependable rituals and artefacts of commemoration already supported the Jewish community's remembrance of and education about its losses. Consequently, these Jewish artefacts and routines comprised a framework around which mainstream representations of the Holocaust, particularly in literature and film, could be positioned. Soon, *The Diary of Anne Frank* would stand alongside other middlebrow commemorative and educative artefacts, such as the autobiographical novel *Night* by Elie Wiesel,⁹⁶ the television mini-series *Holocaust*,⁹⁷ the Pulitzer Prize-winning autobiographical graphic novel *Maus* by Art Spiegelman,⁹⁸ and Arnold Schwartzman's Academy Award-winning documentary *Genocide*.⁹⁹ Together, such artefacts accentuated the Judeocentricity of the Holocaust within mainstream Western society's consciousness. When filmmakers added to these texts – for example, with the Academy Award-winning and extremely popular feature films *Schindler's List*, *Life is Beautiful* and *The Pianist*¹⁰⁰ – opportunities to teach the Holocaust as a Jewish story grew.

Educators have comparatively few artefacts available to them if they choose to teach about the Nazis' homosexual victims. Heinz Heger's *The Men with the Pink Triangle*,¹⁰¹ the anonymous testimony of a homosexual survivor of Sachsenhausen concentration camp, was first published in 1972 and, Jensen argues, 'provided the framework for a larger collective memory' of homosexual Holocaust victimhood.¹⁰² In 2000, the documentary film *Paragraph 175*¹⁰³ added video and audio testimonies from six homosexual Holocaust survivors to the archives. With little testimony available, a number of fictional works about the Nazis' homosexual victims were

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 331.

⁹⁵ Ibid. – It is notable that one of the most recent uses of the pink triangle in mainstream culture was by the American singer and performer Lady Gaga in 2011 at the beginning of her music video for *Born This Way*, an anthem for LGBT rights, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&v=wV1FrqWZyKw> (accessed 25 November 2011).

⁹⁶ Wiesel (1960).

⁹⁷ *Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss*, TV mini-series, USA 1978. Directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, starring Meryl Streep, James Woods and Michael Moriarty. See also Andrew Wormald's article in this volume, pp. 141–52.

⁹⁸ Spiegelman (1986).

⁹⁹ *Genocide*, Documentary, USA 1982. Directed by Arnold Schwartzman, narrated by Elizabeth Taylor and Orson Welles.

¹⁰⁰ *Schindler's List*, USA 1993. Directed by Steven Spielberg, starring Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley; *Life is Beautiful*, USA 1997. Directed by Robert Benigni, starring Robert Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi, Giorgio Cantarini; *The Pianist*, USA 2002. Directed and produced by Roman Polanski, starring Adrien Brody, Thomas Kretschmann, Frank Finlay.

¹⁰¹ Heger (1972).

¹⁰² Jensen (2002), p. 325.

¹⁰³ *Paragraph 175*, Documentary, USA 2000. Directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, narrated by Rupert Everett, see also the film's website for additional background information: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0236576/> (accessed 25 November 2011).

created. Martin Sherman's play *Bent*¹⁰⁴ depicts the Nazis' round-ups, deportations and incarceration of homosexuals in concentration camps; the play 'continued to shape the American gay community's collective memory of past suffering'.¹⁰⁵ In 1997, *Bent* was released as a feature film.¹⁰⁶ Faure's made-for-television movie *A Love to Hide*¹⁰⁷ and the young adult novel *Briar Rose* by Jane Yolen¹⁰⁸ also address the Nazis' persecution of homosexuals, but these texts, although certainly teachable, are probably unfamiliar to mainstream audiences.¹⁰⁹

Compared to prolific mnemonic artefacts and rituals about the Jewish Holocaust victimhood available to educators and learners, artefacts and rituals related to homosexual Holocaust victimhood, and other non-Jewish victimhoods, are scarce. Not only does this prolong the marginalisation of non-Jewish victimhoods within Holocaust commemoration and education, this also prevents educators from addressing the interdependency of victimhoods in their programmes.

Interdependency as a Theoretical Framework

In addition to the LGBT community's lack of rituals and artefacts, the memory of homosexual Holocaust victims and all other non-Jewish victims of Nazism has been muted by the reluctance of some educators, scholars, educational institutions and community leaders to include non-Jewish victims in a meaningful way – or at all – within public commemoration. For example, while the definition of 'The Holocaust' promoted by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum includes, albeit in an ambiguous way, non-Jewish victims, the closing film of the permanent exhibition at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center describes the Holocaust as 'a Jewish story', while both Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and the Imperial War Museum in London omit the Nazis' non-Jewish victims from their definitions altogether.¹¹⁰

Much has been written about the debate over the inclusion of non-Jewish victims. Scholars argue for the 'uniqueness' of Jewish victimhood in comparison to the Nazis' persecution of other groups as well as to other genocides throughout history, with their principal arguments resting on the Nazis' unprecedented intentions to single out only the Jews for complete annihilation.¹¹¹ However, this stance

¹⁰⁴ The play opened in London's West End in 1979, starring Ian McKellen; the New Yorker Broadway production debuted in 1980, starring Richard Gere.

¹⁰⁵ Jensen (2002), p. 331.

¹⁰⁶ *Bent*, Great Britain/Japan 1997. Directed by Sean Mathias, starring Lothaire Bluteau, Clive Owen, Mick Jagger.

¹⁰⁷ *A Love to Hide* (Original title: *Un amour à taire*), France 2005. Directed by Christian Faure, starring Jérémie Renier, Louise Monot, Bruno Todeschini.

¹⁰⁸ Yolen (1992).

¹⁰⁹ It may also be worth considering *Cabaret*, USA 1972. Directed by Bob Fosse, starring Liza Minelli, Michael York, Helmut Griem. The film may have contributed to some awareness about homosexuals and bisexuals under the Reich, although homosexual Holocaust victimhood is not in the foreground of the film's narrative.

¹¹⁰ Novick (1999); Salmons (2003); Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center, Skokie, Illinois: *Karkomi Permanent Exhibition* (opened 6 June 2011), www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/pages/karkomi_permanent_exhibition/18.php (accessed 25 November 2011).

¹¹¹ Bauer (1999); Bauer (2003); Milchman and Rosenberg (2003); Bauman (2003).

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has been challenged, often angrily, by scholars who have discerned a similar drive toward total murder in the Third Reich's treatment of the Sinti and Roma or [...] in the Turkish massacres of Armenians in 1915, or in the European actions against the native peoples of the Americas.¹¹²

Other scholars, in trying to find a compromise between arguments for and against the uniqueness of Jewish victimhood, point out 'the problem of how to remember all the victims of the Nazis without sacrificing to a false universalism.'¹¹³ Mary Johnson and Carol Rittner ask whether the inclusion of non-Jewish victims can be achieved 'without distorting history or the uniqueness of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust,' citing Michael Berenbaum's 'mosaic of victims' solution.¹¹⁴ Berenbaum argues that we must include the Nazis' non-Jewish victims alongside the Jewish victims, pointing out how their victimhoods converge and diverge, in order to illustrate the uniqueness of the Jewish experience.¹¹⁵

While this argument may contribute to a theoretical framework of interdependency of victimhoods, it positions the relationship between non-Jewish and Jewish victimhood as one-dimensional, creates a hierarchy of victimhood, places non-Jewish victimhoods as undeserving of attention and study in their own right, and overlooks how all Holocaust victimhoods overlap in critical ways. Historical factors and events that point to the interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods illustrate how the Holocaust is neither synonymous to a unique Jewish story nor a universal narrative of homogenous victim group experiences. In this way, the interdependency of victimhoods complicates arguments that serve to separate Holocaust victimhoods from each other.

Debates about whom we should include in Holocaust commemoration and education have forced victimhoods apart. These factors and the events that they represent highlight the importance of working to re-integrate Holocaust victimhoods for ethical and pedagogical reasons. Furthermore, the interdependency of Holocaust victimhoods underscores how all communities rely on one another to substantiate each other's testimonies, to develop Holocaust education as they fight genocide and oppression, and to support one another in grief, in the face of continued persecution, and in the celebration of survival.

In 2005, the German government opened the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, a grid of 2,711 separate concrete slabs of varying heights, standing on more than five acres close to the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.¹¹⁶ Three years later, the German government unveiled, in a shaded area of trees and grass in the Tiergarten across the street from the field of concrete, a single additional concrete slab as a memorial to the Nazis' homosexual victims.¹¹⁷ The construction of these separate monuments in Berlin, as well as a separate travelling memorial

¹¹² Engel (2000), p. 3.

¹¹³ Johnson and Rittner (1996), p. 135.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 134.

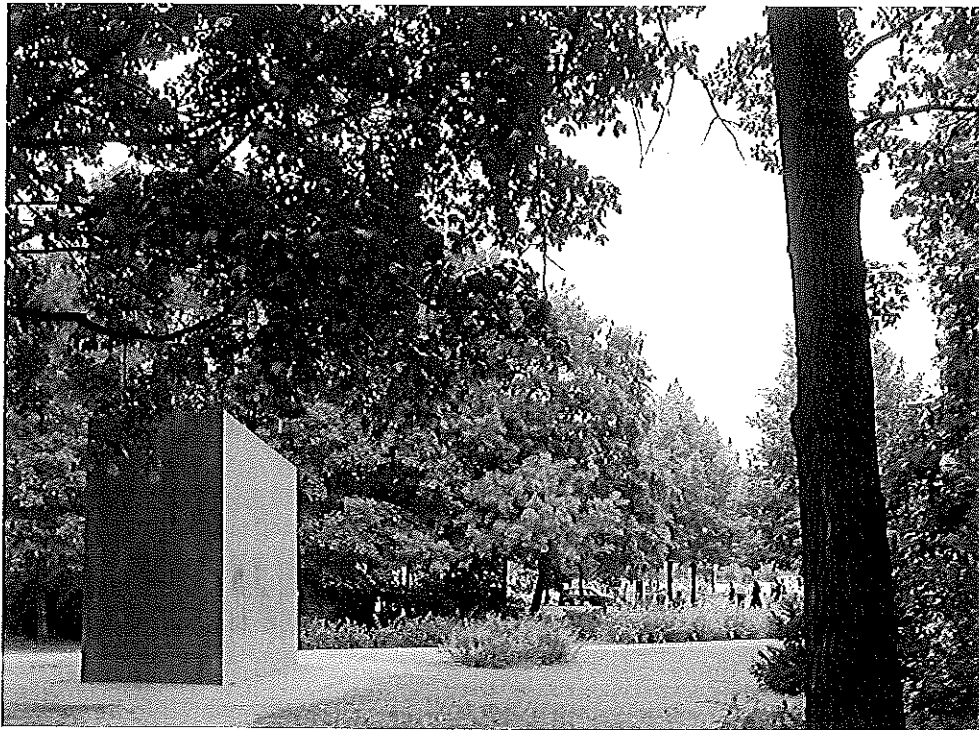
¹¹⁵ Ibid.; Berenbaum (1992).

¹¹⁶ Richard Bernstein, 'Holocaust memorial opens in Berlin', *The New York Times*, 11 May 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/11/international/europe/11germany.html> (accessed 25 November 2011).

¹¹⁷ 'Germany unveils memorial to gay victims of Holocaust', *The New York Times*, 27 May 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/27/world/europe/27iht-berlin.4.13254697.html> (accessed 6 July 2011).

to the Nazis' disabled victims in Ravensburg-Weißenau and a forthcoming memorial fountain to the Nazis' Sinti and Roma victims, illustrates quite clearly how each Holocaust victimhood is treated as independent.¹¹⁸

It has not been ignored that this separation is problematic. At the opening of the Jewish memorial in 2005, the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany voiced 'reservations' about the monument's design as 'an incomplete statement'.¹¹⁹ Individuals shared the same graves and sometimes their triangles overlapped. Yet, the juxtaposition of the two monuments suggests that, in memory, they stand literally apart. We must listen carefully when the imitating design of the homosexual memorial calls out to the Jewish memorial across the busy road: *I am here with you.*



View from the Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted Under the National Socialist Regime to the Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe, which is located on the other side of the busy street behind the trees.

¹¹⁸ Information portal to European sites of remembrance (2011), 'Grey buses memorial Weißenau', <http://www.memorialmuseums.org/eng/denkmaeler/view/1340/Grey-Buses-Memorial-Wei%C3%9Fenau> (accessed 25 November 2011).

¹¹⁹ Bernstein, 'Holocaust memorial opens in Berlin' (note 116).

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