

93 (06/2025)



# MEMORIA

MEMORY • HISTORY • EDUCATION



## NEW OBJECTS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE COLLECTION OF THE STUTTHOF MEMORIAL IN SZTUTOWO

MEDICINE BEHIND  
THE BARBER WIRE.  
CONFERENCE.

THE 80TH  
ANNIVERSARY OF  
THE NUREMBERG  
TRIAL

MELBOURNE

NAZI CAMPS AND  
KILLING SITES

CALL FOR PAPERS:

CONFRONTING  
ANTISEMITISM IN

28TH WORKSHOPS  
ON THE HISTORY  
OF MEMORY OF

# TABLE OF CONTENT

---

MEDICINE BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE.  
CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PAPERS:  
THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUREMBERG TRIAL

NEW ONLINE LESSON AND PODCAST  
ON HOMOSEXUAL MEN IMPRISONED IN AUSCHWITZ  
UNDER PARAGRAPH 175

NEW OBJECTS HAVE BEEN ADDED  
TO THE COLLECTION OF THE STUTTHOF  
MEMORIAL IN SZTUTOWO

THE TECH EXAMEN

CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM  
IN MELBOURNE

28TH WORKSHOP ON THE HISTORY AND MEMORY  
OF NAZI CAMPS AND KILLING SITES

TRANSFORMATIONS OF SHOAH  
TRAUMA IN POST-2000 LITERATURES

We invite all of you to work closely with us. We would be grateful to receive information about events, projects, publications, exhibitions, conferences or research that we should share with our readers. We also accept proposals for articles.

Paweł Sawicki, Editor-in-Chief

Our e-mail: [memoria@auschwitz.org](mailto:memoria@auschwitz.org)

Please do share information about this magazine with others, particularly via social media.

All editions: [memoria.auschwitz.org](http://memoria.auschwitz.org)

# MEDICINE BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE. CONFERENCE

**We invite you to the international conference Medical Review Auschwitz: Medicine Behind the Barbed Wire, which takes place on 15–17 September 2025 in Kraków, Poland.**

Medicine Behind the Barbed Wire aims to educate the world's medical community about the medical ethics and practice in the context of the Second World War, placing special emphasis on the behavior of physicians and other medical professionals imprisoned in Nazi German concentration camps, prisons, ghettos and other places of detainment. The conference discusses malpractice and ethical violations of medical personnel to demonstrate their implications for contemporary medical practice and health care policies.

Keynote speech will be given by Leon Weintraub, who, after the war, became a doctor.

Presentations will cover such topics as "Physician leadership in Nazi euthanasia and sterilization campaigns," "Hygiene Institut der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O/S: What do we know about the main laboratory in KL Auschwitz," "Teaching professional ethics against the backdrop of Nazi medicine: Potentials, challenges, best practice," "Legal and ethical dilemmas of Nazi eugenic propaganda online in an age of disinformation," and "Brain research on the victims of child euthanasia in Lower Silesia."

The conference is organized by the Polish Institute for Evidence Based Medicine in collaboration with the Kraków Medical Society, Institute of National Remembrance and Jagiellonian University Medical College. Conference partners include the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, University of Colorado Center for Bioethics and Humanities, Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics and the International Chair in Bioethics (WMA Cooperation Center).



## Medical Review Auschwitz

## Program:

### Preconference visit

15 September 2025 (Monday)

A special guided tour of the Auschwitz Memorial including areas not available to the public, including Block 10 with an introduction by Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Lang.

### Conference

16 September 2025 (Tuesday)

9:00–9:30

Welcome address

Piotr Gajewski (Poland)

Keynote speech

Leon Weintraub (Sweden) – Guest of Honor, survivor of Nazi German concentration camps

#### Session I

9:30–10:10

Opening lecture: Physician leadership in Nazi euthanasia and sterilization campaigns: How did it go so wrong? What can we learn?

Mildred Solomon (Harvard Medical School, USA)

10:10–10:30

Nazi medical crimes: Escalation of racist ideology, economic rationality, or crimes of opportunity?

Thorsten Wagner (Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics, USA)

10:30–10:50

Nazi medical crimes, professional interests, and economy: The origins of the Declaration of Helsinki

Volker Roelcke (Institute of the History of Medicine, Giessen University, Germany)

10:50–11:10

Research as a tool to protect vulnerable populations: Lessons learned from the Declaration of Helsinki

Karla Childers (Head of bioethics at Johnson & Johnson, USA)

11:10–11:30

Panel discussion

11:30–11:50 Refreshmentbreak

#### Session II

11:50–12:10

Electroconvulsive therapy in Auschwitz: Medical innovation and human experimentation

Herwig Czech (Medical University of Vienna, Austria)

12:10–12:30

"...This would serve for the benefit of the whole family...". Brain research on the victims of child euthanasia in Lower Silesia

Kamila Uzarczyk (Medical University of Wrocław, Poland)

12:30–12:50

Hygiene Institut der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz O/S: What do we know about the main laboratory in KL Auschwitz

Teresa Wontor-Cichy (State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oświęcim, Poland)

12:50–13:10

From Jan Sehn to the Institute of National Remembrance: Criminal medicine in Auschwitz Concentration Camp in historical research and prosecution proceedings

Filip Gańczak (Institute of National Remembrance, Poland)

13:10–13:30

---

# CALL FOR PAPERS: THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NUREMBERG TRIAL

---

The conference titled „Unknown Legacies of the Nuremberg Trials: Regional Approaches and Perspectives in East Central Europe” will take place 3-4 December 2025 in Berlin. Below you can find information about the call for papers.

The purpose of the conference is to present the latest research and to encourage international scholars to reflect on the legacy of the Nuremberg Trials, the specific features of war crimes trials in Central and Eastern Europe, and the current state of research on the prosecution of those suspected of international crimes. What is needed today is a critical analysis of the initiatives undertaken during and after the war, taking into account regional narratives and the actual influence of states on the development of international criminal law.

Application deadline: **5 September 2025**

Please send your paper proposal (max. 300 words) and a short bio note to: [conference@pileckiinstitut.de](mailto:conference@pileckiinstitut.de)

Admission notification: **by 30 September 2025**

We are planning to publish an edited volume devoted to the conference topic. Authors of the conference papers will be asked to submit their chapter manuscripts by 15 March 2026.

The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the work of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg —a landmark series of trials in the development of international criminal law and a key juncture in confronting the crimes committed during the Second World War, as well as in reconstructing the post-war global order. The principles of international law adopted in the Statute of the IMT (the Nuremberg Charter) and the IMT verdict of 1 October 1946 were endorsed by the UN General Assembly in its resolution of 11 December 1946.

These principles then went on to be referenced repeatedly in the work of the International Law Commission. Even during the IMT and the subsequent Nuremberg trials, these principles significantly guided strategies for prosecuting and punishing Axis crimes—both before the national courts of the Allied states and within the proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

The Nuremberg Charter pertained to the prosecution and punishment of the major war criminals of the European Axis and was part of an agreement concluded on 8 August 1945 between the governments of Great Britain, the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and the Provisional Government of the French Republic. However, there were no representatives of the occupied European countries that had experienced the greatest wartime atrocities - and on whose territories mass crimes had been committed, including Poland - either among the authors of the agreement or among the judges and prosecutors of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

Nevertheless, representatives of these countries contributed significantly to Allied efforts to prosecute and punish perpetrators of international crimes, including through their involvement in the United Nations War Crimes Commission in 1943. Their achievements also held significant sway in the development of international law after 1945—beginning with their cooperation in the Nuremberg trials and continuing with the creation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Convention on the Non-





Bundesarchiv\_Bild\_183-H27798,\_Nürnberger\_Prozess,\_Verhandlungssaal

The purpose of the conference is to present the latest research and to encourage international scholars to reflect on the legacy of the Nuremberg Trials, the specific features of war crimes trials in Central and Eastern Europe, and the current state of research on the prosecution of those suspected of international crimes. What is needed today is a critical analysis of the initiatives undertaken during and after the war, taking into account regional narratives and the actual influence of states on the development of international criminal law.

**Application deadline: 5 September 2025**

Please send your paper proposal (max. 300 words) and a short bio note to:  
[conference@pileckiinstitut.de](mailto:conference@pileckiinstitut.de)

**Admission notification: by 30 September 2025**

We are planning to publish an edited volume devoted to the conference topic. Authors of the conference papers will be asked to submit their chapter manuscripts by 15 March 2026.

The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the work of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg —a landmark series of trials in the development of international criminal law and a key juncture in confronting the crimes committed during the Second World War, as well as in reconstructing the post-war global order. The principles of international law adopted in the Statute of the IMT (the Nuremberg Charter) and the IMT verdict of 1 October 1946 were endorsed by the UN General Assembly in its resolution of 11 December 1946.

These principles then went on to be referenced repeatedly in the work of the International Law Commission. Even during the IMT and the subsequent Nuremberg trials, these principles significantly guided strategies for prosecuting and punishing Axis crimes—both before the national courts of the Allied states and within the proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

---

# NEW ONLINE LESSON AND PODCAST ON HOMOSEXUAL MEN IMPRISONED IN AUSCHWITZ UNDER PARAGRAPH 175

---

**"Paragraph 175 Prisoners in KL Auschwitz" is the title of a new online lesson prepared by the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust. It focuses on the fate of homosexual men imprisoned in the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz under §175 of the German Penal Code. The lesson was authored by Bohdan Piętka from the Museum's Research Center.**

The aim of the lesson is to shed light on the history of one of the lesser-known victim groups of Auschwitz – men persecuted and sentenced under laws criminalizing homosexuality.

## GO TO THE LESSON

In addition, the Museum has published a podcast about §175 prisoners in Auschwitz, narrated by Dr. Agnieszka Kita from the Memorial Archive.

"The persecution of homosexuals in the Third Reich, and especially their deportation to concentration camps, is undoubtedly one of the darkest chapters in the history of national socialism. The repression was primarily aimed at enforcing behaviour desired from a political and ideological point of view by the means of terrorising the society. It involved the tightening of penal regulations against homosexuality and deporting those convicted under paragraph 175 to concentration camps," reads the introduction to the lesson.

"The lesson is not only about the Auschwitz camp itself. Readers have the opportunity to learn about the broader social and legal context of the persecution of homosexuals in the Third Reich and its tragic consequences in the concentration camp system. The lesson discusses, among other things, the position of homosexual men in the Second Reich, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich, or the characteristics of their fate in prisons and concentration camps," said Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka, Head of E-learning at the ICEAH.

Partially preserved archival records include information on at least 77 prisoners in Auschwitz identified as having been imprisoned under §175. However, some prisoners sentenced under this paragraph were registered in the camp under other categories, such as political, asocial, or criminal. German researcher Rainer Hoffschildt, using various sources including German archives, estimated the total number of §175 prisoners in Auschwitz to be at least 136.

Among them, Henry Bock was murdered in a gas chamber upon arrival from Drancy on May 30, 1944, and thus was not registered as an Auschwitz prisoner. Hoffschildt,





The aim of the lesson is to shed light on the history of one of the lesser-known victim groups of Auschwitz – men persecuted and sentenced under laws criminalizing homosexuality.

#### GO TO THE LESSON

In addition, the Museum has published a podcast about §175 prisoners in Auschwitz, narrated by Dr. Agnieszka Kita from the Memorial Archive.

“The persecution of homosexuals in the Third Reich, and especially their deportation to concentration camps, is undoubtedly one of the darkest chapters in the history of national socialism. The repression was primarily aimed at enforcing behaviour desired from a political and ideological point of view by the means of terrorising the society. It involved the tightening of penal regulations against homosexuality and deporting those convicted under paragraph 175 to concentration camps,” reads the introduction to the lesson.

“The lesson is not only about the Auschwitz camp itself. Readers have the opportunity to learn about the broader social and legal context of the persecution of homosexuals in the Third Reich and its tragic consequences in the concentration camp system. The lesson

---

# NEW OBJECTS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE COLLECTION OF THE STUTTHOF MEMORIAL IN SZTUTOWO

---

**Mr Andrzej Przyklęk, the son of former Stutthof camp prisoners Helena and Edmund Przyklęk, visited the museum with his family.**

During their visit, Bogusława Tartakowska conducted the guests around the Memorial Site and was presented with some incredibly valuable camp memorabilia. This included documents issued following the end of the "death march", a patch bearing Helena Przyklęk's camp number, and a cigarette case with an engraved lid that belonged to Edmund. One particularly noteworthy item is a wool blanket that Helena received during the camp's evacuation, on which she sewed her camp number as a mark of identification. The story of Helena and Edmund is poignant; they lived in Toruń and were arrested on 8 August 1944. Although Edmund's records have been lost, Helena's detention document reveals that her husband was accused of espionage. Helena herself was suspected of being aware of his alleged illegal activities without notifying the authorities.

Following the investigation and their time in the Toruń prison, they were both transported to the Stutthof camp in September 1944, where they were categorised as political prisoners and assigned the numbers 92317 (Helena) and 92471 (Edmund).

In the winter of 1945, Helena and Edmund participated in the camp's evacuation on foot. Shortly after their liberation, between 18 March and 1 May 1945, Edmund assumed the role of economic manager in a military hospital in Łęcze before being sent to a resettlement centre in Lębork. He eventually made his way back home. While the exact details of Helena's journey during the evacuation remain unclear, it is known that she returned home safely.

The Stutthof Museum would like to extend its heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Andrzej Przyklęk and his family for their visit to the Memorial Site and for the incredibly valuable addition to our museum collection. We assure you that we will take great care of these artefacts, just as the families of the prisoners have done over the years.

92317

# THE TECH EXAMEN

Fellowships at Auschwitz for the Study of Professional Ethics (FASPE) promotes ethical leadership for today's professionals through annual fellowships, ethical leadership trainings, and symposia, among other means. Each year, FASPE awards 80 to 90 fellowships to graduate students and early-career professionals in six fields: Business, Clergy, Design & Technology, Journalism, Law, and Medicine. Fellowships begin with immersive, site-specific study in Germany and Poland, including at Auschwitz and other historically significant sites associated with Nazi-era professionals. While there, fellows study Nazi-era professionals' surprisingly mundane and familiar motivations and decision-making as a reflection-based framework to apply to ethical pitfalls in their own lives. We find that the power of place translates history into the present, creating urgency in ethical reflection. Each month one of our fellows publishes a piece in *Memoria*. Their work reflects FASPE's unique approach to professional ethics and highlights the need for thoughtful ethical reflection today.

## Introduction

*What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing.* - Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

*The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?"* Ezekiel 37:1-3

Our FASPE trip took us to many sites that speak to and memorialize professional involvement in the Holocaust. We visited the locations of early wartime atrocities, such as a forced labor camp, a euthanasia center near Berlin, and critical logistical and operational hubs like the House of the Wannsee Conference, where Nazi officials devised the Final Solution. Our journey culminated in a visit to Auschwitz, the ultimate symbol of the Third Reich's genocidal regime.

Throughout this process, we reflected on key questions facing professional lawyers, business owners, and engineers who contributed to the design and operation of these sites. For example, we discussed the engineers of Topf and Sons, which was founded in 1878 as a developer of heating systems and crematoria<sup>1</sup>. Under the Nazi Regime, Topf pivoted to meet the needs of the regime, and, rather than designing crematoria that enabled dignified interment preparations for grieving families, Topf engineers optimized ovens to maximize throughput and minimize conspicuous odors. Some engineers, such as Kurt Prüfer visited Auschwitz throughout the design process, going beyond the minimum design requirements to exceed required specifications<sup>2</sup>. How did so many regular professionals, many of whom seem to have been motivated by mundane career ambitions, perpetuate such an atrocity?

The shift from "business as usual" in the post-WWI economy to the "death economy" of WWII did not take place overnight. An economic downturn and national shame in the wake of Germany's defeat in WWI slowly eroded German people's trust in the Weimar Republic<sup>3</sup>. Once the Nazis came to power in 1933, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, helmed

<sup>1</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Topf and Sons: An "Ordinary Company".

<sup>2</sup> Liberation Route Europe. Biography: Kurt Prüfer.

<sup>3</sup> Doris L Bergen. War and genocide: A concise history of the Holocaust. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

## Introduction

*What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing. - Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition*

*The hand of the Lord came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" Ezekiel 37:1-3*

Our FASPE trip took us to many sites that speak to and memorialize professional involvement in the Holocaust. We visited the locations of early wartime atrocities, such as a forced labor camp, a euthanasia center near Berlin, and critical logistical and operational hubs like the House of the Wannsee Conference, where Nazi officials devised the Final Solution. Our journey culminated in a visit to Auschwitz, the ultimate symbol of the Third Reich's genocidal regime.

Throughout this process, we reflected on key questions facing professional lawyers, business owners, and engineers who contributed to the design and operation of these sites. For example, we discussed the engineers of Topf and Sons, which was founded in 1878 as a developer of heating systems and crematoria<sup>1</sup>. Under the Nazi Regime, Topf pivoted to meet the needs of the regime, and, rather than designing crematoria that enabled dignified interment preparations for grieving families, Topf engineers optimized ovens to maximize throughput and minimize conspicuous odors. Some engineers, such as Kurt Prüfer visited Auschwitz throughout the design process, going beyond the minimum design requirements to exceed required specifications<sup>2</sup>. How did so many regular professionals, many of whom seem to have been motivated by mundane career ambitions, perpetuate such an atrocity?

The shift from "business as usual" in the post-WWI economy to the "death economy" of WWII did not take place overnight. An economic downturn and national shame in the wake of Germany's defeat in WWI slowly eroded German people's trust in the Weimar Republic<sup>3</sup>. Once the Nazis came to power in 1933, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, helmed a powerful apparatus that provided convenient scapegoats. People who were already on the margins of society were increasingly portrayed as dangerous "others" who posed risks to the dominant Aryan race<sup>4</sup>. This situation allowed for the slow development of more extreme circumstances: first, forced labor camps filled with criminals and prisoners of war became broadly socially acceptable. Next, mass euthanasia of disabled or terminally ill persons, while unsettling to many, was normalized during the war. Finally, most Germans looked the other way as the Nazis undertook the systematic extermination of an entire race of people.

While top Nazi leaders like Goebbels served as thought leaders in German society and helped shift public opinion towards willful ignorance or even positive acceptance of the Holocaust, tens of thousands of regular citizens needed to passively or actively collaborate to make these atrocities possible. Over the course of the Nazi period, it became easy for career-motivated non-ideologues within the professions to either slip unquestioningly into support of the state or to convince themselves that their small, indirect, or ethically neutral role within the mass-murder machine exonerated them from any culpability. One extreme example is Albert Speer, a leading architect within the regime who was ultimately responsible for the entire German industrial system. After the war, Speer claimed that he was a "pure technocrat unconcerned with ethical and political tasks" despite serving as armaments minister throughout the Third Reich<sup>5</sup>.

Learning about professionals like Speer and the Topf engineers left us with more questions than

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Eric Katz, *The Nazi engineers: Reflections on technological ethics in hell. Science and engineering ethics*, 17:571–582, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Simon Johnson and Daron Acemoglu. *Power and progress: Our thousand-year struggle over technology and prosperity*. Hachette UK, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> Langdon Winner. *Do artifacts have politics?* In *Computer ethics*, pages 177–192. Routledge, 2017.



how it might be applied, and the broader consequences of our design and implementation choices.

### **The Jesuits and the Daily Examen**

While this critical reflection is of the utmost importance, identifying the ways that modern tech is wrapped up in perpetuating or innovating systems of marginalization can be overwhelming. Given the complexity and global nature of modern socio-technical systems, it can be difficult to know where to start. Luckily, as technologists, complex systems are our wheelhouse.

If we are capable of designing planes that fly, operating rovers on Mars, and developing generative artificial intelligence (AI) models with billions of parameters, perhaps we are also capable of thinking critically about the impact of our work. In tech, many professional engineers like myself think of ourselves as problem solvers. If we hope to be ethical designers, we must apply these same problem-solving skills to thorny, professional moral issues.

In order to tackle complex technical problems, engineers break them into smaller, more manageable pieces. Individual engineers work on these smaller-scoped challenges and coordinate to bring individual components together to make the entire system work together. We can take a similar approach in reflecting on the impact of our work.

The Jesuits, a religious order within the Catholic tradition, offer a wealth of resources and practices that both those within and outside of the order leverage for individual and communal discernment—thoughtfully and intentionally reflecting on decisions, including moral or vocational choices<sup>9</sup>. One such practice, called the daily examen, invites practitioners to mentally review and evaluate the decisions they make each day<sup>10</sup>.

Practitioners begin by expressing gratitude for the gifts they have in their lives. They then move on to reviewing their actions from the day and the emotions that different moments evoke in them. Next, they focus on one or a few moments and how their actions either did or did not align with their values. Finally, they shift their focus towards the next day, contemplating how they can act more fully in line with their values.

The examen can be practiced anywhere at any time. It is a flexible practice that leaves space for practitioners to spend as much or little time reflecting on their day as they would like. The shift in focus towards the practitioner's agency enables them to focus on concrete ways to make small changes to live their values more fully. On the one hand, this focus enables a person to avoid the potential paralysis that can emerge from the sheer complexity inherent in making sweeping changes. On the other, it can help a person to recognize their own potential to make impactful changes and to avoid becoming disillusioned and fatalistic about the possibility of change.

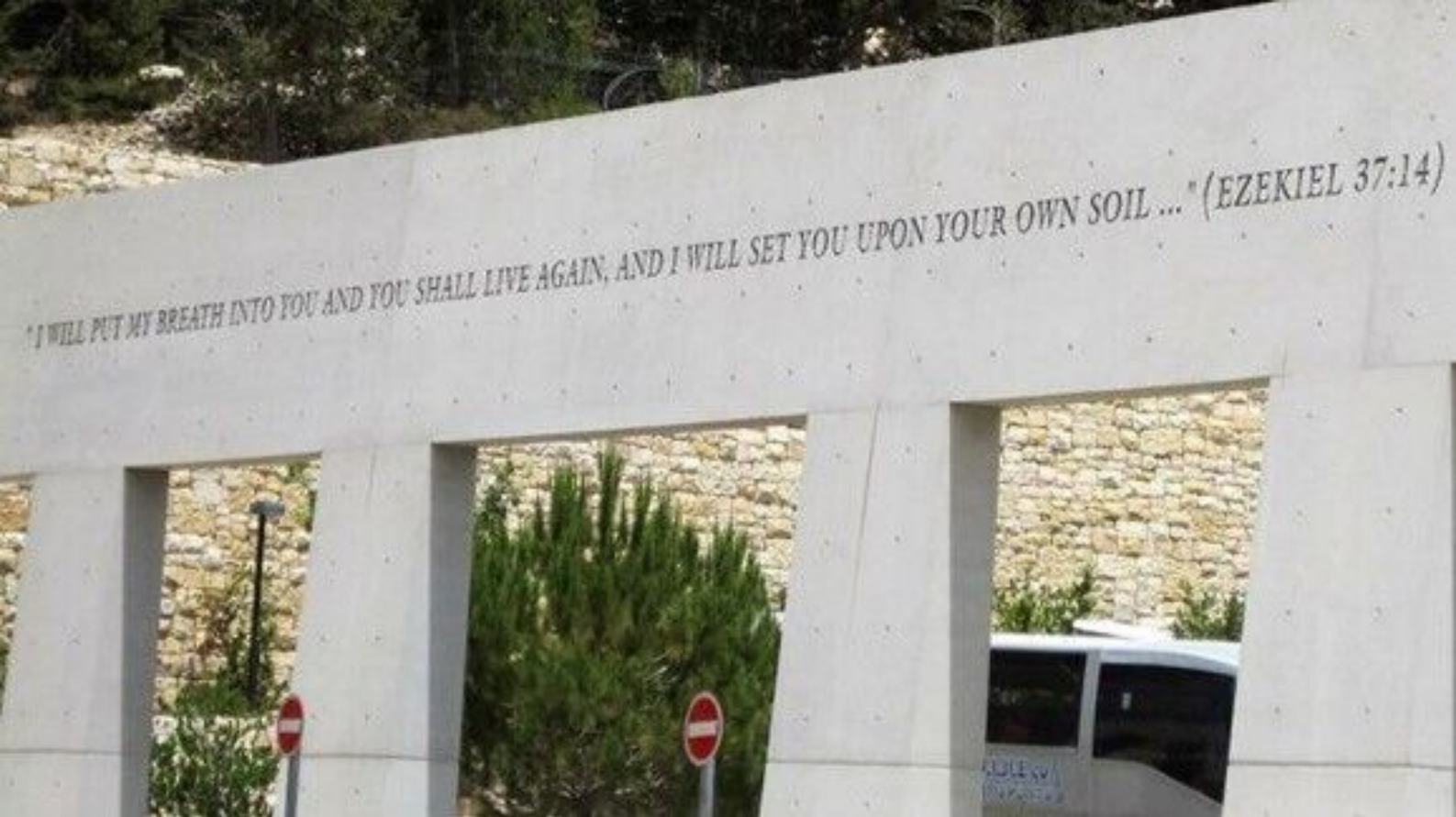
What changes might be possible if modern engineers and technologists adopted a practice like the examen? Drawing on three key themes touched on throughout the FASPE experience—abstraction, accountability, and collective power—I suggest an adaptation of the Jesuit daily examen called the "Tech Examen" that can be practiced by designers and technologists in their professional lives. In the following sections, I dive more deeply into each theme and how it relates to the FASPE trip. I also propose questions corresponding to each category. At the end of this reflection, these questions are synthesized into the "Tech Examen," and I provide an overview of how to engage with this practice.

### **Dry Bones in Auschwitz**

<sup>8</sup> Simon Johnson and Daron Acemoglu.

<sup>9</sup> Office of Ignatian Spirituality. Ignatian Discernment.

<sup>10</sup> Office of Ignatian Spirituality. The Examen.



Inscription at the entrance of Yad Vashem: "I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil." - Ezekiel 37:14

how it might be applied, and the broader consequences of our design and implementation choices.

### **The Jesuits and the Daily Examen**

While this critical reflection is of the utmost importance, identifying the ways that modern tech is wrapped up in perpetuating or innovating systems of marginalization can be overwhelming. Given the complexity and global nature of modern socio-technical systems, it can be difficult to know where to start. Luckily, as technologists, complex systems are our wheelhouse.

If we are capable of designing planes that fly, operating rovers on Mars, and developing generative artificial intelligence (AI) models with billions of parameters, perhaps we are also capable of thinking critically about the impact of our work. In tech, many professional engineers like myself think of ourselves as problem solvers. If we hope to be ethical designers, we must apply these same problem-solving skills to thorny, professional moral issues.

In order to tackle complex technical problems, engineers break them into smaller, more manageable pieces. Individual engineers work on these smaller-scoped challenges and coordinate to bring individual components together to make the entire system work together.

We can take a similar approach in reflecting on the impact of our work

The Jesuits, a religious order within the Catholic tradition, offer a wealth of resources and practices that both those within and outside of the order leverage for individual and communal discernment—thoughtfully and intentionally reflecting on decisions, including moral or vocational choices<sup>9</sup>. One such practice, called the daily examen, invites practitioners to mentally review and evaluate the decisions they make each day<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Hannah Arendt. The human condition. University of Chicago press, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Doris L Bergen. War and genocide: A concise history of the Holocaust. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009. Edwin Black. IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance Between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation-Expanded Edition. Dialog press, 2012.

<sup>13</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Brandenburg T4 Facility. Libeskind, a+u nr 257: 82.



At the start of the program, physically and mentally disabled Germans, including many children, were killed through experimental gassing. In choosing which patients were to live and which were to die, doctors relied on patient demographic data, which was reported on mandatory medical forms used in hospitals around the country. This information included whether the patients received regular visits, how long they had been hospitalized, which illness they suffered from, whether they had committed a crime, their occupation (and whether they performed useful work), and their nationality. Patients who suffered from certain diseases, those committed for more than five years, those deemed criminally insane, or those not of German blood or nationality were to be reported immediately. Many of these patients were subsequently killed by gas. In euthanasia centers like Brandenburg, as in the concentration camps after them, abstract representations of these patients determined whether they would live.

In the modern tech landscape, and taking AI technologies as a prime example, engineers rely heavily on developing and leveraging abstract representations of the world for modeling and decision-making. This abstraction is necessary, because it is never possible to capture the full complexity of the world in any one model. Thus, technological progress depends on the development of effective abstractions that represent the most important aspects of a particular decision-making task within a given context. With modern AI systems, engineers make a variety of decisions that affect the abstractions leveraged within these models. These include the selection of data in each dataset, features to represent the data for the given decision task, AI model structures and training objectives, and output spaces for these models (i.e., the set of possible decision outcomes).

Blind trust in the “objective” nature of these AI systems on the part of the public and technologists themselves can lead people to believe that these abstractions are morally neutral. Since their perspectives are colored by their particular social contexts within the tech world, technologists especially might begin to believe that they have no agency in selecting these abstract representations. We as technologists tend to employ techno-optimist lenses, trusting that new technologies will always improve society—this tendency leads many of us to decide to work in tech in the first place. However, this viewpoint can make us complacent about the impact of our work. We risk departing from the “space of moral reasons,” where we reflect continuously and intentionally on our moral responsibilities and choices<sup>15</sup>.

As a concrete, modern example of misguided techno-optimism and uncritical data abstraction within an AI-based decision support system, the Design & Technology cohort studied the Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) tool for predicting recidivism<sup>16</sup>. Based on demographic data about a person accused of committing a crime, including their “current charges, pending charges, prior arrest history, previous pretrial failure, residential stability, employment status, community ties, and substance abuse,” the machine learning-based COMPAS tool assigns the defendant a risk score, predicting the likelihood that the defendant will reoffend before their trial if they are released on bail<sup>17</sup>. The tool is intended to help judges more efficiently make decisions about pre-trial detention. It is supposed to be more impartial and fairer than human judges who are subject to cognitive biases<sup>18</sup>.

While the “objectivity” of this system seems like it could produce social benefits, there are several unchecked assumptions about bias and fairness in the current criminal justice system baked into its design. Since the COMPAS system was trained on

<sup>14</sup>Kristen Iannuzzi. *Nazi Euthanasia and Action T4: Effects on the Ethical Treatment of Individuals with Disabilities*. 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Shannon Vallor. *The AI Mirror: How to Reclaim Our Humanity in an Age of Machine Thinking*. Oxford University Press, 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Julia Angwin, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu, and Lauren Kirchner. *Machine bias*. In *Ethics of data and analytics*, pages 254–264. Auerbach Publications, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Northpointe. *Practitioner’s Guide to COMPAS Core*, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

# Questionnaire 1

Case no. ....

Name of Institution: .....  
in: .....

First and family name of patient: ..... maiden name: .....

Date of birth: ..... City: ..... District: .....

Last residence: ..... District: .....

Unmarr., marr., wid., div.: Relig.: Race<sup>a</sup> ..... Natlty: .....

Address of nearest relative: .....  
.....

Regular visits and by whom (address): .....  
.....

Guardian or Care-Giver (name, address): .....  
.....

Cost-bearer:.... How long in this inst.: .....

In other institutions, when and how long: .....

How long sick:.. From where and when transferred: .....

Twin ☐ YES ☐ NO ... Mentally ill blood relatives: .....

Diagnosis: .....  
.....

Primary symptoms: .....  
.....

Mainly bedridden? ☐ YES ☐ NO ... Very restless? ☐ YES ☐ NO ... Confined? ☐ YES ☐ NO .....

Incurable phys. illness: ☐ YES ☐ NO ... War casualty: ☐ YES ☐ NO .....

For schizophrenia: Recent case ..... Final stage .. good remission .....

For retardation: Debility: ..... Imbecile: .... Idiot: .....

For epilepsy: Psych. changes ..... Average freq. of attacks .....

For senile disorders: Very confused ..... Soils self .....

Therapy (Insulin, Cardiazol, Malaria, Salvarsan, etc.): Lasting effect: ☐ YES ☐ NO .....

Referred on the basis of §51, §42b Crim. Code, etc. .... By .....

Crime: ... Earlier criminal acts: .....

Type of Occupation: (Most exact description of work and productivity, e.g. Fieldwork, does not do much.—Locksmith's shop, good skilled worker.—No vague answers, such as housework, rather precise: cleaning room, etc. Always indicate also, whether constantly, frequently or only occasionally occupied)  
.....  
.....

Release expected soon: .....

<sup>a</sup>German or related blood (German-blooded), Jew, Jewish Mischling (half-breed) 1st or 2nd degree, Negro (Mischling), Gypsy (Mischling), etc.

human-generated data from the existing system, and machine learning-based systems tend to act as “mirrors” of the data they are trained on<sup>19</sup>, COMPAS simply learned to automate many existing biases.

For example, disproportionate policing of certain groups in particular neighborhoods means that these populations, which are often populations of color, are overrepresented in the dataset. Beyond this fact, the features chosen to represent individuals in the COMPAS dataset (in other words, the abstractions chosen for the data and modeling of this application) include factors such as prior arrest history. Such data points likely have bias built into their measurement due to the over-policing of certain neighborhoods. Another similar example is community stability, which is likely to correlate with race due in part to redlining. Not only is it difficult to accurately measure these features due to existing biases in the policing and criminal justice systems but using them to make future decisions also serves to reinforce the biases that are already present in the dataset because the machine-learning system assumes that the distribution of recidivism outcomes based on this set of features is constant over time.

Concretely, consider the findings from ProPublica’s investigative report on the COMPAS system. In their investigation, ProPublica discovered that although race was not used as a predictive feature in the COMPAS system, the system’s false positive rate for Black individuals (44.9%) far exceeded the rate for white individuals (23.5%)<sup>20</sup>. Black individuals, in other words, will disproportionately bear the brunt of the mistakes made by the system when it is deployed as a trusted decision-support tool for judges. The abstractions used to represent these individuals thus mirror and reinforce our broken criminal justice and policing systems<sup>21</sup>. The COMPAS tool can amplify our existing brokenness, but it cannot possibly conceive of creative solutions that will meaningfully contribute to a more just society.

What does this mean for us technologists who work to develop systems like COMPAS? First, it is critical for us to be aware that we are constantly choosing abstract representations of the world when we create models for the tech applications that we work on.

We have the power to decide which abstractions we use, and there are consequences for the choices we make. We must be mindful of whose perspectives are represented in our choices and whose might be neglected.

If we hope to design systems informed by diverse perspectives, we cannot do it alone. As designers and technologists, many of us have access to social and financial resources that might limit our perspectives and blind us to the absence of neglected points of view. It is our responsibility to meaningfully seek out and engage a broad range of stakeholders in our technical decisions, especially those stakeholders who will be most impacted by new technologies.

Without such perspectives informing what should be designed and how, we are better off not designing new technologies at all. In engaging key stakeholders in the design process, we should strive to place impacted communities in control of the abstractions used to represent them.

<sup>19</sup> Shannon Vallor. *The AI Mirror: How to Reclaim Our Humanity in an Age of Machine Thinking*. Oxford University Press, 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Julia Angwin, Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu, and Lauren Kirchner. Machine bias. In *Ethics of data and analytics*, pages 254–264. Auerbach Publications, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Shannon Vallor. *The AI Mirror: How to Reclaim Our Humanity in an Age of Machine Thinking*. Oxford University Press, 2024.

<sup>22</sup> Batya Friedman. Value-sensitive design. *interactions*, 3(6):16–23, 1996. Michael J Muller and Sarah Kuhn. Participatory design. *Communications of the ACM*, 36(6):24–28, 1993.

human-generated data from the existing system, and machine learning-based systems tend to act as “mirrors” of the data they are trained on<sup>19</sup>, COMPAS simply learned to automate many existing biases.

For example, disproportionate policing of certain groups in particular neighborhoods means that these populations, which are often populations of color, are overrepresented in the dataset. Beyond this fact, the features chosen to represent individuals in the COMPAS dataset (in other words, the abstractions chosen for the data and modeling of this application) include factors such as prior arrest history. Such data points likely have bias built into their measurement due to the over-policing of certain neighborhoods. Another similar example is community stability, which is likely to correlate with race due in part to redlining. Not only is it difficult to accurately measure these features due to existing biases in the policing and criminal justice systems but using them to make future decisions also serves to reinforce the biases that are already present in the dataset because the machine-learning system assumes that the distribution of recidivism outcomes based on this set of features is constant over time.

Concretely, consider the findings from ProPublica’s investigative report on the COMPAS system. In their investigation, ProPublica discovered that although race was not used as a predictive feature in the COMPAS system, the system’s false positive rate for Black individuals (44.9%) far exceeded the rate for white individuals (23.5%)<sup>20</sup>. Black individuals, in other words, will disproportionately bear the brunt of the mistakes made by the system when it is deployed as a trusted decision-support tool for judges. The abstractions used to represent these individuals thus mirror and reinforce our broken criminal justice and policing systems<sup>21</sup>. The COMPAS tool can amplify our existing brokenness, but it cannot possibly conceive of creative solutions that will meaningfully contribute to a more just society.

What does this mean for us technologists who work to develop systems like COMPAS? First, it is critical for us to be aware that we are constantly choosing abstract representations of the world when we create models for the tech applications that we work on.

We have the power to decide which abstractions we use, and there are consequences for the choices we make. We must be mindful of whose perspectives are represented in our choices and whose might be neglected.

If we hope to design systems informed by diverse perspectives, we cannot do it alone. As designers and technologists, many of us have access to social and financial resources that might limit our perspectives and blind us to the absence of neglected points of view. It is our responsibility to meaningfully seek out and engage a broad range of stakeholders in our technical decisions, especially those stakeholders who will be most impacted by new technologies.

Without such perspectives informing what should be designed and how, we are better off not designing new technologies at all. In engaging key stakeholders in the design process, we should strive to place impacted communities in control of the abstractions used to represent them.

In designing new technologies, we must ask what is needed rather than merely what is

<sup>23</sup> Mona Sloane, Emanuel Moss, Olaitan Awomolo, and Laura Forlano. Participation is not a design fix for machine learning. In Proceedings of the 2nd ACM Conference on Equity and Access in Algorithms, Mechanisms, and Optimization, pages 1–6, 2022.

<sup>24</sup> Doris L Bergen. War and genocide: A concise history of the Holocaust. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

While my colleagues and I do not gather to plan mass genocides, the experience of coming to a beautiful location to meet with colleagues and friends to discuss “difficult problems” hit close to home. In my own research, I receive grants from the US Department of Defense to develop technologies that can enhance human-autonomy teaming, an area of research that could have far-reaching military applications. While the participants at Wannsee were certainly well aware of the implications of what they were planning, many were convinced that they were working towards a public good. I wondered what it would take for me to convince myself that I am solving important problems in the name of advancing science or contributing to the common good, while I am actually enhancing our ability to target marginalized groups more efficiently and effectively. Perhaps I already am. This issue vexes me now, and I will continue to grapple with it throughout my career.

Inside the House of the Wannsee Conference, we viewed documents from the meeting. One document that captured my attention was an invitation to attend the conference. It reminded me of the invitation I received to attend the seminar at Dagstuhl. I thought about the emotions I felt after receiving that invitation. I felt like my work, which I often feel uncertain about, had been validated. I could rest assured that my professional community recognized my work as important and meaningful. My insecurities were temporarily assuaged, and I could feel gratified that I was making progress towards my ambitions.

While the participants at Wannsee were already top Nazi officials, I wondered how they responded to receiving their invitations to participate in the conference. Did they feel reassured that they were doing noble work? Did they feel validated in the positions they held? Did they feel honored to participate in something so important? I wondered to what extent the participants’ professional ambitions and insecurities hardened them to the consequences of their actions. To what extent do my own ambitions and insecurities dictate the direction of my work? Could they blind me to my own accountability with respect to societal harms? I came away from our visit to Wannsee with a renewed sense of the importance of reflecting on such questions, including what drives my own decision-making from day to day. I began to ask whether my motivations and decisions were aligned with my values and how I could approach decision-making with more intentionality.

Questions that technologists can reflect on in considering our accountability within our professional roles include:

- What decisions did I make today?
- Which motivations guided my decision-making process?
- Did these decisions align with my values?
- What will I do the same or differently in the future?

### **Identifying Collective Power**

*Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.” I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.*

Ezekiel 37:9-10

The third theme that emerged during the site visits and discussions throughout the FASPE trip was related to the power of collective action, both for good and ill. With each site we visited, it was clear that no one person alone could have executed the Holocaust. It took the participation and cooperation of tens of thousands, with some estimates suggesting up to 200,000 perpetrators total<sup>28</sup>. Partially, the Nazis managed to foster such widespread

<sup>28</sup> Atika Shubert and Nadine Schmidt. Most Nazis escaped justice. Now Germany is racing to convict those who got away. CNN.

<sup>29</sup> Doris L. Bergen. War and genocide: A concise history of the Holocaust. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009.



Der Inhalt  
der Sicherheitsspiegel und des SD

134

Auswärtiges Amt  
D III 21-0  
reg. 12 JAN 1940  
Bef. 1 (ang) Dore, H. (ang)

Ein für den 4.12.1961 abgemerkter  
Besuch wurde mit dem Bescheid  
aufgebrochen, dass der Besuch  
auf den 11.12.1961 verlegt wird.  
Der Besuch wird am 11.12.1961  
um 10.00 Uhr stattfinden.  
Der Besuch wird am 11.12.1961  
um 10.00 Uhr stattfinden.

Da die zur Isolierung stehenden  
Fraktionen beiden längeren Aufschluß erlaube, ist  
ist die Arbeit wesentlich zu einer

REMARKS: all miscellaneous photographs  
from 20. JANUARY 1942 in 11.25.1942  
Berlin. in German papers 50-55

Der in einem letzten Einlage-  
schreiben angeführte Preis der geliehenen Herren  
kleint. verbleibt.

**Keywords:** child sexual abuse; disclosure; social support

K210415

379500



people most likely had some awareness of what was happening to Jews and other marginalized people during the Third Reich, information only officially flowed on a need-to-know basis, such that few individuals saw the whole picture.

This structure of work made it easier for each person to reduce their sense of moral culpability. For example, at Auschwitz the train operators could say that they were only transporting people from one location to the next. The doctors could say that they were only selecting those who were fit for work. The guards could say that they were simply keeping order within the camps. The operators of the gas chambers could say that they were only mechanistically undertaking their orders. This distribution not only reduced each individual's sense of responsibility and accountability but it also disempowered any one person from having enough agency to effectively fight the system. Even if one person had the courage to stand up, there were plenty of additional people available to take their place. Beyond this fact, professional ambitions or fear of the repressive government likely kept many from speaking out.

However, during various FASPE site visits, we learned about many examples in which professional non-participation did not result in violent retribution or death but rather in reassignment to new roles or new tasks. For example, at the Brandenburg Euthanasia Center, we learned that doctors who refused to participate in the euthanasia program were most often simply assigned to practice elsewhere. While individual doctors who chose to refuse to cooperate with the T4 program could not have had sweeping effects on the efficacy of this Nazi program on their own, if many or all doctors refused to participate, this shift could have amounted to a substantial slowing of the process. The challenge for doctors in that context would have been identifying potential allies in resistance and determining concrete steps that they could have taken to be most effective.

Modern tech, while less obviously malevolent in its objectives, has similarities. For example, in companies with many software engineers, each individual engineer has limited power to dictate the company's overall direction. On the flip side, each engineer also shoulders limited accountability for any negative outcomes, since they contribute only small pieces. It can be easy to feel impotent in the face of these enormously complex socio-technical systems. In this way, it becomes easy to fall prey to a fatalism about our ability to work for good within these systems. Is it better to stay in our roles to try to make changes from within, or are we better off leaving altogether? While there are moral advantages to each choice, having a groundswell of people who stay in their roles and continue to wrestle with these questions can be powerful. Holding onto hope for change amid seemingly immutable and unyielding systems is possibly one of the most subversive actions that we can take. What gives me hope is that while the Holocaust and similar atrocities are almost always perpetrated collectively, they can also be resisted collectively. In the modern tech context, if we can identify how tech-induced marginalization or exploitation is perpetrated, perhaps we also have what we need to shift collective action in a different direction. This task will require us to identify what "social capital" we have access to, in other words, what the inherent value of our social networks is for effecting change in our professional settings<sup>30</sup>. Through strategies like those used in community organizing, we can begin to identify areas of mutual concern and to work towards maximizing the chance of positive change<sup>31</sup>. If we stop and reflect on where we might find allies, how we can best foster relationships with them, and how we can work together to reimagine new directions for our work, perhaps we can start to change the trajectory of tech wherever it is not applied toward positive ends. Some questions we can reflect on when considering how to best leverage our collective power include:

<sup>30</sup> Robert D Putnam. *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of american community*. Simon Schuster, 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Brian D Christens and Paul W Speer. *Community organizing: Practice, research, and policy implications*. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 9 (1):193–222, 2015.

- Which specific changes do I hope to make with respect to the work that I am doing or my work environment?
- What information or additional perspectives do I need to make the greatest impact?
- What social capital and other resources do I need to make these changes?
- What social capital do I have access to now?
- Where am I lacking social capital that I need, and how can I start to build it?
- What power do my allies and I have to make meaningful changes, and what are the most effective concrete actions we can take to make those changes?

### **The Tech Examen**

To practice the Tech Examen, begin by reflecting on the first two grounding questions to focus your attention on what is most important to you and where you find meaning. Then, with these reflections in mind, select one or more of the questions from the rehumanizing tech, assessing accountability, or identifying collective power categories to contemplate further. Choose as many or as few questions to ponder as you would like and spend as much or as little time reflecting as you wish.

### **The Tech Examen**

Grounding Questions:

- What is most important to me? What are my values?
- Where did I find meaning and purpose today?

Rehumanizing Tech:

- Who could be impacted by the work I did today?
- Which abstractions or representations did I use to characterize them or factors related to them?
- How might my design choices dehumanize these people, and what are the possible impacts of such dehumanization?
- Where my choices of abstract representations might serve to dehumanize people, how



- Which specific changes do I hope to make with respect to the work that I am doing or my work environment?
- What information or additional perspectives do I need to make the greatest impact?
- What social capital and other resources do I need to make these changes?
- What social capital do I have access to now?
- Where am I lacking social capital that I need, and how can I start to build it?
- What power do my allies and I have to make meaningful changes, and what are the most effective concrete actions we can take to make those changes?

### **The Tech Examen**

To practice the Tech Examen, begin by reflecting on the first two grounding questions to focus your attention on what is most important to you and where you find meaning. Then, with these reflections in mind, select one or more of the questions from the rehumanizing tech, assessing accountability, or identifying collective power categories to contemplate further. Choose as many or as few questions to ponder as you would like and spend as

# FASPE

Fellowships at  
Auschwitz  
for the Study of  
Professional Ethics

## HELP THE FUTURE OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP. SUPPORT FASPE TODAY.

# CONFRONTING ANTISEMITISM IN MELBOURNE

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum has long been a leader in innovative Holocaust education, using storytelling, testimony, and human connection to help people think critically and practice empathy.

At the opening of the London IHRA plenary, a cross-cutting session brought together experts from different countries and across working groups to share how they are tackling contemporary antisemitism. Among them was Dr. Steven Cooke, who represents Australia on the IHRA Memorials and Museums Working Group. He introduced delegates to the Melbourne Holocaust Museum's Critical Thinking is Critical initiative—an ambitious project designed to spark meaningful conversations, challenge assumptions, and inspire real change. The session encouraged valuable exchanges on the challenges and opportunities in countering antisemitism and fostering social cohesion.

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum has long been a leader in innovative Holocaust education, using storytelling, testimony, and human connection to help people think critically and practice empathy. In 2024 alone, their expert educators worked with over 27,000 students, combining essential historical knowledge with personal stories to inspire a deeper understanding of difference and diversity.

Research backs up the power of Holocaust education. The Gandel Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness in Australia

Survey—Australia's first national study on Holocaust knowledge—found that the more people learn about the Holocaust, the more empathy they show toward Jewish people, First Nations communities, asylum seekers, and other minority groups.

But education is just the beginning. The Melbourne Holocaust Museum is expanding its efforts to create real, long-term change through Critical Thinking is Critical, a multi-year, multi-sector initiative focused on building critical thinking skills, encouraging open and honest conversations, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility. The goal? To create a more thoughtful, inclusive, and connected society.

The initiative is built on three core pillars:

**Educate:** Expanding programs that challenge assumptions, deepen historical knowledge, and encourage meaningful discussions.

**Innovate:** Creating new, immersive storytelling experiences that help people step into someone else's shoes and see the world from a different perspective.

**Advocate:** Working with educators, businesses, and community leaders to support dialogue on social cohesion and inclusivity.

Throughout 2024, the Melbourne Holocaust Museum has engaged with teachers, business leaders, community groups, and the media to explore fresh approaches to tackling contemporary challenges—all while staying true to its mission as a Holocaust Museum. This year, they will launch:





Dr Steven Cooke (dyrektor generalny Muzeum Holokaustu w Melbourne), Hugh de Kretser (przewodniczący Australijskiej Komisji Praw Człowieka), dr Breann Fallon (dyrektor ds. programów i wystaw Muzeum Holokaustu w Melbourne) oraz Ingrid Stitt (posłanka, minister ds. wielokulturowości).

At the opening of the London IHRA plenary, a cross-cutting session brought together experts from different countries and across working groups to share how they are tackling contemporary antisemitism. Among them was Dr. Steven Cooke, who represents Australia on the IHRA Memorials and Museums Working Group. He introduced delegates to the Melbourne Holocaust Museum's Critical Thinking is Critical initiative—an ambitious project designed to spark meaningful conversations, challenge assumptions, and inspire real change. The session encouraged valuable exchanges on the challenges and opportunities in countering antisemitism and fostering social cohesion.

The Melbourne Holocaust Museum has long been a leader in innovative Holocaust education, using storytelling, testimony, and human connection to help people think critically and practice empathy. In 2024 alone, their expert educators worked with over 27,000 students, combining essential historical knowledge with personal stories to inspire a deeper understanding of difference and diversity.

Research backs up the power of Holocaust education. The Gandel Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness in Australia

Survey—Australia's first national study on Holocaust knowledge—found that the more people learn about the Holocaust, the more empathy they show toward Jewish people, First Nations communities, asylum seekers, and other minority groups.

# 28TH WORKSHOP ON THE HISTORY AND MEMORY OF NAZI CAMPS AND KILLING SITES

The History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Killing Sites Workshop invites you to apply to the 28th Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Killing Sites, which will take place at the Ravensbrück Memorial Museum and across the Berlin-Brandenburg region in Germany, from 8 to 14 June 2026.

The workshop will focus on scale and trajectories as analytical categories for studying the Holocaust, Nazi concentration camps, killing sites, and other National Socialist crimes.

Since 1994, this international workshop—organized by and for emerging scholars, practitioners and Holocaust educators—has provided an interdisciplinary and non-hierarchical forum dedicated to research on National Socialist camps and killing sites. Participants examine a wide range of topics, including persecution, isolation, forced labor, mass murder, and the representation of Nazi violence in various memorial cultures. The workshop fosters a collaborative, supportive, and comparative approach to studying these histories through an array of methodologies and sources.

To ensure a space free from traditional academic hierarchies, the program is open exclusively to applicants who have not handed in their PhD dissertation at the time of application (i.e., PhD candidates, MA students, emerging practitioners and Holocaust educators). Participants may attend the workshop up to three times: as a speaker, participant, and organizer.

## **Workshop Theme: Scale and Trajectories**

National Socialist violence and the Holocaust unfolded across vast geographic landscapes while profoundly shaping the lived experiences of individuals caught within its machinery of persecution. Since the spatial turn in Holocaust studies, scholars have increasingly examined the ways in which Nazi violence was structured—how ghettos, concentration camps, and killing sites functioned not just as hybrid sites of persecution and genocide but as dynamic nodes in a transnational system of terror. This perspective has been further enhanced by the mobilities turn, which emphasizes the movement of people, information, and power across borders, and the microhistorical turn, which sheds light on the granular, personal dimensions of history and the local dynamics of persecution.

Inspired by these turns, this workshop hopes to continue in this promising direction by analyzing how the crimes of National Socialism were enacted through space and time.

This workshop places scale and trajectories at the center of analysis, asking how scholars can move between different levels of historical inquiry—from

The workshop will focus on scale and trajectories as analytical categories for studying the Holocaust, Nazi concentration camps, killing sites, and other National Socialist crimes.

Since 1994, this international workshop—organized by and for emerging scholars, practitioners and Holocaust educators—has provided an interdisciplinary and non-hierarchical forum dedicated to research on National Socialist camps and killing sites. Participants examine a wide range of topics, including persecution, isolation, forced labor, mass murder, and the representation of Nazi violence in various memorial cultures. The workshop fosters a collaborative, supportive, and comparative approach to studying these histories through an array of methodologies and sources.

To ensure a space free from traditional academic hierarchies, the program is open exclusively to applicants who have not handed in their PhD dissertation at the time of application (i.e., PhD candidates, MA students, emerging practitioners and Holocaust educators). Participants may attend the workshop up to three times: as a speaker, participant, and organizer.

### **Workshop Theme: Scale and Trajectories**

National Socialist violence and the Holocaust unfolded across vast geographic landscapes while profoundly shaping the lived experiences of individuals caught within its machinery of persecution. Since the spatial turn in Holocaust studies, scholars have increasingly examined the ways in which Nazi violence was structured—how ghettos, concentration camps, and killing sites functioned not just as hybrid sites of persecution and genocide but as dynamic nodes in a transnational system of terror. This perspective has been further enhanced by the mobilities turn, which emphasizes the movement of people, information, and power across borders, and the microhistorical turn, which sheds light on the granular, personal dimensions of history and the local



**R**avensbrück  
**B**erlin  
2026 **B**randenburg

The 28<sup>th</sup> Workshop on the History  
and Memory of the National  
Socialist Camps and Killing Sites:  
Scale and Trajectories



# TRANSFORMATIONS OF SHOAH TRAUMA IN POST-2000 LITERATURES

**In the eighty years since the end of the Second World War, perspectives on the Shoah have evolved significantly, shaped by geopolitical and social factors. These changes have included a shift from silence towards visibility, fascination, privatization, instrumentalization or, conversely, marginalization.**

Today, the global debate is revisiting the question of preserving the historical memory of the Shoah in the context of migration and debates on postcolonialism again. As historical distance grows, new generations of writers, artists, and scholars face the challenge of representing this trauma in ways that engage contemporary audiences while remaining anchored in historical memory.

The conference „Transformations of Shoah Trauma in Post-2000 Literatures“ that will take place in Olomouc in Czechia between 5-6 November 2025 seeks to examine how the legacy of the Shoah continues to shape literary expression today, tracing its global trajectories. It will explore multilingual perspectives, comparative readings, and transnational approaches to the subject.

Key areas of focus include:

- Narrative innovation in Shoah literature after 2000
- Intergenerational transmission of trauma
- Ethical questions surrounding representation
- The intersection of Shoah literature with emerging cultural and technologically mediated frameworks.

Additionally, the conference will address the evolving role of testimony in an era without first-generation witnesses, the impact of digital and multimedia storytelling, and the ways in which contemporary literature negotiates the boundaries of fiction, memoir, and historical documentation.

By bringing together scholars and writers, this event aims to foster dialogue on the ongoing relevance of Shoah narratives in global cultural memory and their transformative impact on post-2000 literature across and beyond linguistic and national borders.

**For more information and the Call for Papers visit the Conference Webpage.**

**Applications: by 31 August 2025**

## **Organizing Partner Institutions**

Palacký University Olomouc (Center for Jewish Studies, Department of Czech Studies, Department of Dutch Studies)

Catholic University in Lublin (International Centre for Research of the History and Cultural Heritage of the Central and Eastern European Jews)

Royal Holloway, University of London (Holocaust Research Institute)

The conference is supported by the European Association for Jewish Studies

Invitation to the International Academic Conference

# **Transformations of Shoah Trauma in Post-2000 Literatures**

November 5–6, 2025 | Palacký University Olomouc



# EMORIA

MEMORY • HISTORY • EDUCATION

**memoria.auschwitz.org**

**PUBLISHER**

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Paweł Sawicki

**ASSISTANT EDITOR**

Agnieszka Juskowiak-Sawicka

**EDITED BY**

Bartosz Bartyzel  
Marek Lach  
Łukasz Lipiński

**CONTACT**

memoria@auschwitz.org

