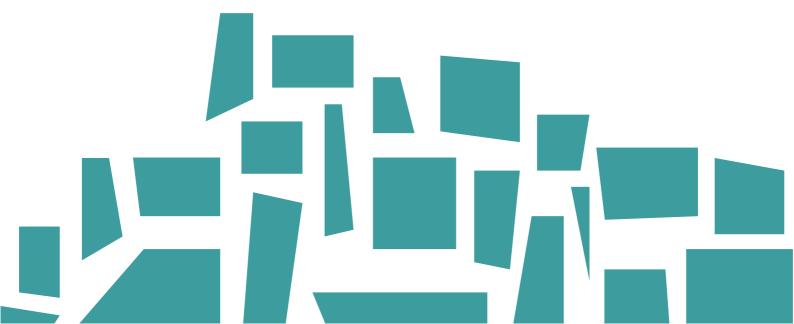






# REPORT ON COOPERATION

Between memorials, local museums, and Educational institutions



Two on-line panel discussions held in May and September 2022 were centered on places of memory and International exhibitions, focusing on the transnational dimension of the Holocaust and other WWII genocides/systematic murder, while considering its local and regional aspects and best educational practices in formal and non-formal education related to them.

In the introduction, the speakers presented some examples of international cooperation regarding preserving, conserving and sharing cultural heritage related to WWII, including plans for preparing new exhibition at now empty Yugoslav Memorial Pavilion at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oswiecim, Poland as well as necessary rebuilding of monuments at Kampor Memorial Cemetery, at former Fascist concentration Camp on island Rab.

The panels brought together curators, teachers and youth workers with representatives of different memorial institutions to identify new opportunities for cooperation on preserving WWII cultural heritage and strengthening quality and relevance of Holocaust education and remembrance activities with young people. They also aimed to propose recommendations for improving international interdisciplinary cooperation on education, research and remembrance of the Holocaust and other WWII genocides/systematic murder during WWII and suffering of ethnic, religious, and marginalized groups.

The panels were part of the project "Between memory and oblivion: WWII places of memory", developed by *Documenta* and European partners: MMH Dachau and the University of Regensburg (Germany), *Associazione 4704* and *Topografia per la storia* (Italy), APIS Institute and Social Academy (Slovenia), to stimulate debate on World War II memorial sites (former concentration camps, forced labor camps, execution sites, prisons, locations of resistance...) and to confront abandonment of these places, as well as the forgetting stories of victims and survivors, which we often face.

The project is funded by the European Union, through the CERV program.









Petra Jerić -Stara Gradiška (HR)

Milena Žarković -Stara Gradiška (HR)







Neja Rakušček - Bučka (SL)



Mirna Varga - Jasenovac (HR)

## Online discussion "Between memory and oblivion", part 1

On Tuesday, **May 31, 2022**, the first part of the online panel discussion entitled "Between Memory and Oblivion" was held. As an introduction to the panel, **Ivo Pejaković**, director of the Jasenovac memorial site, and **Aneta Vladimirov**, from the Serbian National Council and member of the Council of the Jasenovac memorial site, presented the situation of the Jasenovac memorial site and the need to strengthen this institution, which is the only one in Croatia that systematically deals with the heritage of the Second World War. **Thomas Porena**, researcher of the organization *Topografia per la storia*, presented the biography of Bruno Prister, a survivor of a prisoner interned in several conentration camps during the Holocaust. The discussion was moderated by **Vesna Teršelič**, Director of *Documenta* – Center for Dealing with the Past.

In the introduction **Vesna Teršelič** invited the panelists to address the challenges related to strengthening of Jasenovac Memorial and its role in influencing remembrance activities, in Croatia and other post-Yugoslav countries, where most of descendants of former inmates live.

The first panelist, **Ivo Pejaković**, stressed that Jasenovac Memorial is the only institution in the territory of Croatia that deals directly with WW2. He also underlined that most of commemorative activities had been directed towards the Homeland War in the 1990s saying: "Everything else has been more or less forgotten. Most of the activities at the locations related to WW2 are up to enthusiasts and civil society organizations that cared about them."

Ivo Pejaković has pointed out special position of Jasenovac Memorial, as it is supervised by Ministry of Culture and Media and is part of Croatian official institutions.

He stressed that "on the other hand it is impossible to do our jobs without cooperating with the representatives of the victims, so the Jewish Community, Serbian community, Roma community, Antifascist Associations and so on. In these circumstances our task is to find some common narrative, common language because if we are not all on the same side it is going to be hard to bring some progress for the institutions themselves. This progress can be summarized to three key tasks:

- 1. First of all it is to increase the number of schools that visit the memorial site of Jasenovac;
- 2. The other aspect that we are looking forward inside the memorial site of Jasenovac is to develop some models to better face the challenges in front of us and also establish a Research department in the Memorial;"
- 3. The third thing is related to the locations that are part of the memorial area of Jasenovac. Responsibility of Jasenovac is not linked only with location at the village of Jasenovac, but also in other sites, at Bročice, Stara Gradiška and others."

Jasenovac Memorial co-operates with the Ministry of Culture and Media as well as with Ministry of Science, Education and Sport in the Republic of Croatia in organising international seminars relating to commemorations of the Day of Holocaust Remembrance on 27th January, and organises some workshops at Jasenovac Memorial Site, in the Memorial Museum and Education Centre, for all visitors, as well a for groups of pupils and students from abroad.

The second panelist, **Aneta Vladimirov**, pointed out that number of visitors remains low. In 2021 Jasenovac had 8.768 visitors, 5289 from Croatia and 5289 from the other countries. She also commented on "lack of public commitment to the Memorial, especially taken into account that statistically more than half of the visitors do not come from Croatia, or they come from some regions of Croatia which are historically more interested for WWII remembrance, such as Istria.

There are very few visitors from the other parts of the country. That shows a decreasing interest and some sort of politics of forgetfulness that gives space to revisionism." Also: "We have data that high school students come to Jasenovac, but the high schools are obliged to cover their cost and then ask for reimbursements from the Ministry of Education, which makes the organizing way more difficult."

Aneta Vladimirov also stressed that concerning permanent exhibition which opened in 2006 "Since the very beginning representatives" of victims' communities had several issues. Its implementation has not been very consistent." She added that: "In Croatia there are two institutions, two memorial sites. The first one is the one of the Homeland War at Vukovar, the other one in Jasenovac. When it comes to the visibility, or the financial means, it shows that the Memorial site in Vukovar is being supported by government with eight times more financial means than Jasenovac Memorial. This shows that the relation between Memorials and amount is related in how we remember the traumas and what do we learn from these traumas."

She concluded with addressing question: "What is the culture of remembrance? From the minority perspective this means shaping and learning from history based on experience and not identity, where experience is the common name for all that want to learn something about themselves." Finnally she underlined the most urgent task: "We can say that the most urgent thing is the minimum of organizational dignity of the memorial site of Jasenovac, where the researchers will be able to do their job and get the support to publish their books, their work."

**Thomas Porena** presented the biography of Bruno Prister, a survivor of a prisoner interned in several concentration camps during the Holocaust and pointed out in discussion: "I think that people are people before of being citizens of any nation... There is the history of people and people from everywhere can write the history of people. It depends on what eyes; on what lenses they have... We don't need to be perfect historians with perfect language skill and knowledge skill to do something in the territory."



Marco Fornasin - Visco and Gonars (IT)





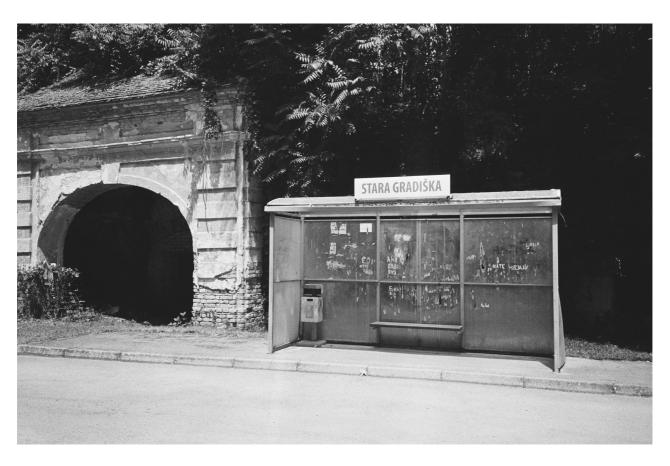


Silvia Marinčić - Jasenovac (HR)



Fée van Cronenburg - Dachau (DE)





Vanja Tadić - Stara Gradiška (HR)

# Online discussion "Between memory and oblivion", part 2

On Tuesday, **September 27, 2022** the on-line panel discussion entitled "Between memory and oblivion" / part 2 was held. In the introductory part, the panelists presented selected examples of international cooperation. **Thomas Lutz**, Director of the Museum department, *Topographie des Terrors*, Berlin and **Nataša Mataušić**, historian and curator, Zagreb presented negotiations regarding the future permament exhibition of the, now empty, Yugoslav pavilion in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oswieci. **Elma Hašimbegović**, director of *Historical Museum of Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Sarajevo presented pasted and planned international exhibitions and programs on the fate of the victims of World War II. **Saša Petejan**, journalist and curator, *Zavod APIS*, Koper, Ljubljana presented planned renovation of the Kampor Memorial Cemetery on the island of Rab. The discussion was moderated by **Vesna Teršelič**, director of *Documenta*.

Concerning the process of negotiations on the permanent exhibition in pavilion in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which started in 2011, **Thomas Lutz** stressed: "The UNESCO office in Venice had the very good idea that it is necessary to erect a new international-national exhibition in the memorial museum in Auschwitz. As you know, many states from which victims came to Auschwitz have the chance to erect memorial exhibitions... Now the idea is to have an international exhibition from the six States that are members of the UNESCO. Kosovo is not yet a member of UNESCO. It would be the first time, as far as I know, in the world that six States do together one exhibition about the history of the second World War." He added: "If you have the possibility to discuss things among experts, to build trust and to do it on a level that is clear that no one has the majority and can overwhelm the others it is possible to get the notion of the history, which is a very complex history, very complicated history." "On the level of experts it worked, on the level of politics is it much more complex".

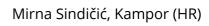
**Nataša Mataušić**: added: "We could not divide people and victims according to today's political division... We didn't not want today's countries border to kind of make this division and reflect this division in Auschwitz exhibition, to avoid the division and the concept of balkanization." "The key subject of this exhibition would be the victims that suffered from the area of former Yugoslavia."

**Elma Hašimbegović** stressed: "I am talking from a very specific situation of a public institution that for 30years does not benefit from public budget, but it left somewhere in the air, because of unresolved issues and the political situation."

**Saša Petejan** underlined: "What we are missing is a history of small nations." "We try to keep the arguments alive with different activities."

### **Recommendations:**

- Address Request to the future Croatian Chairmanship of IHRA to organize a study trip to Jasenovac and Rab ahead of the plenary meetings in Zagreb and Dubrovnik next year.
- Propose additional session prior to IHRA plenary meeting
- Address EHRI regarding revisiting maps with concentration maps sites
- Address USHMM regarding revisiting maps with concentration maps sites











Kaja Koražija - Bučka and Maribor (SL)



Vanja Tadić, Zagreb (HR)









Fée van Cronenburg -Dachau (DE)

BMO - Report on cooperation (Draft)

Documenta – Centar za suočavanje s prošlošću: Documenta – Centar za suočavanje s prošlošću kontakt@documenta.hr

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Zagreb, September 2022.

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T·p·S to·po·gra·fi·a/ per·la/ sto·ri·a/ luoghi e percorsi







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