Architecture at the Sites of the Former Nazi Concentration Camps. Functional Changeability of Commemoration

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1.1 Introduction - An Image of a Nazi Concentration Camp in Modern Culture

Emaciated prisoners indifferently watching the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, people on the verge of death crammed into the barracks of the KL[1] Buchenwald, diggers pushing hundreds of bodies into mass graves at the KL Bergen-Belsen – these were some drastic photographs taken by the Allied soldiers of the anti-Nazi coalition, who came to liberate the Nazi concentration camps. Those pictures were frequently presented by the world media, when the Allied forces – after the liberation of the concentration camps – appealed to the representatives of the American Congress, British Parliament and media representatives for an investigation of the situation they had encountered behind the camp fences. The intensity of media reports is today referred to as a media blitz. Widespread activities undertaken by mass media contributed to the dissemination of information about the tragedy that took place in Europe during the Second World War (Marcuse 2010c: 188). The photographs that went around the world presented scenes that no one could have ever imagined before. They became an integral part of culture and have remained there for decades since the end of the war. Today, these photographs have become a frequent theme in literature, movies and visual arts. They still inspire subsequent generations of artists, who visualise the remembrance of the past.

The network of concentration camps (in German: *Konzentrationslager*) was one of the main pillars of the Third Reich regime. It was a basic tool used for terrorising European people and supporting the German National Socialism in its fight against racial and political enemies and also against those members of the society who were considered by the Nazi dictatorship as individuals unfit to function in the German Reich. In the totalitarian system, underlain by permanent domination over individuals in all aspects of their lives, concentration camps were intended to become laboratories implementing mechanisms of social relationships that could be useful in the context of the total control over the world in the future (Arendt 1989).

Since the very first months of the Nazi dictatorship in 1933 and until the end of the war operations some twelve years later, there were dozens of the main KL units established in various towns and in the areas far from any human settlements, in Germany and in the territories of other European states under the German occupation. The KL units developed a network of numerous sub-camps and their administrative centres. The National Socialism regime spread terror in cooperation with almost 12 000 camps (including concentration, extermination, forced labour and prisoner-of-war camps, police prisons, Germanisation and displacement camps), sub-camps, labour kommandoes and ghettoes established within urban structures. Several million men, women and children representing various nationalities were imprisoned in inhumane conditions. At least two million people lost their lives at the main concentration camp units as a result of an industrialised process of murdering, drastic living conditions and extermination through forced labour. Three million people lost their lives because of their racial origin at immediate extermination camps, where the Nazis exterminated Jewish people and members of Romani and Sinti communities. The number of victims murdered at that time will never be ultimately determined. The killers managed to largely erase traces of the genocide, so most of their victims have so far remained anonymous.

In pursuit of the domination of one society over others, humanity then crossed yet another civilised moral boundary. The history of the concentration camp system exposed imperfections in the structures of a modern society and its typical progressive rationalisation – the occurrence of mechanisms related to industrialisation and bureaucracy in the process of concentrating enemies and their extermination, contributed later to a genocide committed on a scale never imagined before – as Zygmunt Bauman (2009) observes in his essays. The experience of concentration camps had cast a deep shadow on the values of Europe that was trying to recover from ruins. Thousands of people had to live with a trauma of camp atrocities that in many cases resulted in mental disorders that are now

1 KL – a German abbreviation for Konzentrationslager, a concentration camp (the translator's note)

referred to as a survivor's guilt syndrome. Despite the flow of time and generation changes, the legacy of the Nazi concentration camp system has become a strong factor shaping our contemporary society.

A Nazi concentration camp is a highly capacious notion in terms of semantics – it is woven from historical facts discovered over the decades to the present and from myths created on the basis of actions of historical policy, undertaken by the particular countries of post-war Europe and the states located outside its territory. The notion often functions as a sub-set of the multi-faceted Holocaust term. Whenever associated with the Holocaust, the origins of concentration camps, their stages and multi-layered characteristics of the rule of terror at those places, seem to fade away in the social awareness. Next to such metonymies as the Shoah or Auschwitz, a Nazi camp confines *a complex historical and cultural truth in one notion and shallows what is important from the perspective of the term, as well as from the perspective of a real tragedy, which it is referred to* (Błaszczyk 2016: 76). Despite the seven decades that have passed since the end of the war, the history of the Nazi concentration camp system has not been fully analysed and the research studies on it have been continued, revealing new details and contexts.

In the social awareness, since the time of their liberation, concentration camps have been functioning with various intensity levels over the subsequent decades. The first global swell of interest was related to the previously mentioned media reports, just after the war. In shocking photographs and accounts given by eye-witnesses, they bluntly exposed the crimes committed by the Nazis. The international attention was also drawn by the trials against the National Socialism murderers at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. Later on, the topic of concentration camps was suspended, because at the turn of the 1940s and 1950s some attempts were made at stabilising the post-war policy. A new map of Europe was being formed at that time and a lot of activities were being undertaken to restore numerous towns from ruins and to bring normal everyday life back to their inhabitants. The next stage of settlement with atrocities committed at the concentration camps took place ten years later, when in 1961 a trial was opened against Adolf Eichmann. It was a time to emphasize once again the tragedy of concentration camp victims, particularly in the context of the mass extermination of Jewish people. Related to the events of the Second World War, this particular aspect was again strongly focused on at the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries. It resulted, among other things, from a significant increase in accessibility of historical data, as a consequence of revealing various documents in the states of Eastern Europe, after the fall of the Soviet Bloc in the 1990s (Winter 2007). At present, the popularisation of the history of concentration camp operation has been also attributed to one of the Hollywood blockbusters of 1993, namely: to *Schindler's List*, directed by Steven Spielberg (Hodgkinson 2013: 22). Nowadays, concentration camps come as the strong distinguishing features of contemporary culture. The impossibility of conveying their tragedies, suggested by Theodor Adorn, has paradoxically become an inspiration that shapes the art in the new century.

The first publications on a tragic fate that the Nazi Germans inflicted on millions of people at concentration camps started to appear in the early post-war years, in memories and stories written by former prisoners. Stories of human life in extreme conditions were presented by, among others, Seweryna Szmaglewska (*Dymy nad Birkenau*, 1945), Tadeusz Borowski (*U nas w Auschwitzu; Proszę państwa do gazu*, 1946; *Pożegnanie z Marią*, 1947), Primo Levi (S*e questo è un uomo*, 1947), Jorge Semprún (*Le Grand Voyage* 1963; *Le mort qu'il faut*, 2001) and Imre Kertész (*Sorstalanság*, 1975). Those books gave rise to a literature genre now numbering in thousands of titles disseminated around the world.

Autobiographies written by former prisoners and numerous literary works published subsequently have made the phenomenon of concentration camps more interesting for filmmakers. Over the past decades significant numbers of movies related to this topic have been made in various countries and in various genre conventions. Among them, the following pictures can be listed: *Pasażerka* (directed by Andrzej Munk, Witold Lesiewicz, 1963), *Escape from Sobibor*, (directed by Jack Gold, 1987), *Kornblumenblau* (directed by Leszek Wosiewicz, 1988), *Schindler's List*, (directed by Steven Spielberg, 1993), *La vita è bella*, (directed by Roberto Benigni, 1997), *The Reader*, (directed by Stephen Daldry, 2008), *Saul fia*, (directed by László Nemes, 2015). Numerous films have contributed to an increase in the interest in the history of the Second World War and to dissemination of themes related to extermination sites in art. Some scientists indicate some particular attention that has been drawn to the history of the extermination of Jewish people by an American mini-series, *Holocaust*, broadcast in 1978, directed by Marvin J. Chomsky and based on a screenplay by Gerald Green (van Vree 2003: 234; Saryusz-Wolska 2009: 12; Wachsmann 2016: 21). Most probably, the popularisation of the subsequent episodes of the mini-series significantly contributed to the dissemination of the *Holocaust* notion (a Greek term for a burnt sacrifice), understood as a general term for mass racial extermination that the Nazi Germans inflicted on Jews and other ethnic groups during the Second World War.

International interest in the theme of concentration camps and its constant presence in modern culture have established their position as one of the most important and globally recognised symbols in com-

mon history. This situation has also started a process of partial trivialisation of concentration camp tragedies. There is a concern that by becoming an abstract symbol, a concentration camp will refer to an equally speculative drama (Pietrasik 2010). Andreas Huyssen (1995, in: Olick and Robbins, 2014: 119) emphasizes a paradoxical status of commemoration, occurring simultaneously with a revival of the memory landscape and a progress of thanato-tourism (dark tourism). The development of visual carriers of knowledge about the past takes place along with a decline in historical awareness. Data of the past are now being transformed and over-interpreted, allowing history to function behind a multi-layered fabric of meanings. Although it might sound controversial, a concentration camp is now a notion recognisable in the world of pop-culture. It is possible because the taboo boundaries have been gradually crossed in the artistic interpretation of the Holocaust and other tragedies of the Second World War. Concentration camps, as synonyms of the absolute evil, have been appearing in pop-culture artefacts more and more often. This fact stemmed from, among other factors, a discourse of the 1990s, in which some artistic activities gave rise to various forms of deconstruction and innovation in presenting the Holocaust (Feinstein 2000). An example of such activities can be traced in 1992, when the *Maus* comic was published. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale* by Art Spiegelman presents the Holocaust in a form of a sequential comic story where animals are the main characters. Nevertheless, it was not an attempt made at trivialising the topic but rather at presenting a zone where the traumatic history functions between the eye-witnesses and their descendants. Zbigniew Libera also refers to a similar context to present a concentration camp in a Lego installation. A Concentration Camp (1994) includes some photographs presenting several packages of popular toy blocks that can be used for building a model of a Nazi concentration camp.

Nowadays, pop-culture familiarises the society with history, and visual techniques disseminated on a massive scale make the message easier to be understood. There is, however, a threat that historical facts can be manipulated. Some simplifications and mythicisation of events and characters that appear in the narration result in a possibility that some distortions and over-interpretation may permeate the collective memory. Put into the metalwork of the gate leading to the Auschwitz I concentration camp by an order of the SS authorities, a notorious slogan *Arbeit macht frei* is an example of a false image of a historical artefact that functions in the global awareness. This epigraph is commonly identified with the Holocaust. It appears in films about the history of mass extermination of Jewish people and it illustrates numerous publications on the same topic. However, according to some historical considerations, this was not the gate through which hundreds of thousands of people entered the last stage of their lives before death in the gas chambers. This one was actually the main gate to the second complex of the camp that was located two kilometres further – at the KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau.

The remembrance about a place determines its rank in the cultural space (Golka 2009). Considering the former concentration camp Auschwitz, popularisation of the knowledge about this place has resulted in a common tendency of *establishing some symbolic geography […] […], where the camp represents both: the centre and the peripheries; it is the core of evil and, at the same time, it is set in a zone located outside the boundaries of a civilised language and behaviour* (Anna Ziębińska-Witek 2009: 152). The site of the former concentration camp in Oświęcim is the strongest symbol of the Second World War functioning in the social awareness (Kwiatkowski et al. 2010). The popularisation of the *Holocaust* term in the 1980s occurred simultaneously with various interpretations of the history of the KL Auschwitz, the number of which was increasing in geometrical progression and which were pushing it toward a mythical archetype. Today, the former camp functions as an *epicentre of the Holocaust* (Young 1993: 120).

Limiting the understanding of the history of the camp operation to one and only question, the symbolic role raises a lot of controversies (Cole 1999). Nikolaus Wachsmann (2016: 24) believes that the myth of Auschwitz should be debunked; however, in the process of commemoration, strong emphasis should be put on the role played by this particular KL unit in mass extermination of Jews. In his extensive study *KL. A History of Nazi Concentration Camps*, the historian observes that at present Auschwitz is a synonym of the Holocaust, especially when last two years of its operation are taken into consideration. However, this concentration camp had been established as a place strengthening German domination over the occupied Polish territory. It was evolving into a form of a murderous institution, along with transformations going on in the entire network supervised by the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office (*SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt – SS-WVHA*). It was established in the pursuit of an ideal based on some organisational models developed in the concentration camps that had been established earlier by the Third Reich regime (among others, the KL Dachau and the KL Sachsenhausen). There, everything was created on a larger scale and mastered to perfection, in order to ultimately build the largest concentration camp (in accordance with the register documents prepared by the SS administration in August 1943, 74 000 prisoners - out of their total number of 224 000 prisoners registered in all the concentration camps - were placed in the KL Auschwitz). In spring 1942 Himmler decided to include the KL Auschwitz in the programme of "the final solution to the Jewish

question" and the highest numbers of prisoners were murdered there.

At the KL Auschwitz the organisation of the enemy concentration system reached the peak of terror, transforming the camp into a mass extermination site. This process, however, had its origins in the KL Dachau, which was the first camp ever established by the Third Reich regime (Hoffman 1998). Established in 1933, the camp (shortly after the National Socialism German Workers' Party took control over the power in Germany) is the second unit most frequently referred to in the narration related to the history of concentration camps. Over decades, the post-camp site in Dachau was one of the most often visited places, attracting tourists from Western Europe and North America. Due to the restrictions imposed during the Cold War, the former concentration camp near Munich was a place where citizens of western countries could confront the architecture of the Nazi terror.

Social attention has been largely focused on those two KL units – in Dachau and in Auschwitz, Therefore, the understanding of their role in the entire system run by the SS-WVHA has been blurred and other places of mass extermination, such as Treblinka, Bełżec, Sobibór, Chełmno-on-the Ner and other smaller camps with their satellite subcamps have found themselves somewhere at the peripheries of memory. Over the decades, analytical research studies on the history of the functioning of the entire terror system that allowed for presenting the fate of the concentration camps other than Auschwitz and Dachau, had been very scarce. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century (Wachsmann 2016; Sofsky 2016) when some scientific publications started to provide comprehensive descriptions of concentration camps, presenting them as a network of units controlled by one administrative structure and combining their separate histories into an entirety. Such an approach allowed for a multi-layered presentation of the murderous system that evolved with a terrible speed, from an organisation intended to imprison political adversaries, through various forms of forced labour camps to its ultimate form – an industrialised murder system.

1.2 Aim of the Study

Considering the analysis presented in the previous part of the monograph, it is significant to discuss the method of spatial design of the sites where the Third Reich once decided to imprison and systematically exterminate European people, in order to ensure that the remembrance of their fate is preserved in a way that is closest to historical facts. The boundaries of the former Nazi concentration camps still encompass a lot of material traces, despite the fact that generally the original infrastructure of most camps and their sub-units has been intentionally and largely destroyed or it has deteriorated naturally with the flow of time and under the impact of natural environment. In their published studies, some scientists who analyse the history of the Nazi regime (Marcuse 2010: 186; Wachsmann and Caplan 2010: 14, Wachsaman 2016), observe that the history of the functioning of the particular concentration camps has been quite well documented in numerous scientific and popular scientific publications; however, such publications do not present the history of the spatial organisation of those camps after the end of the Second World War in a sufficient way. Hence, the primary aim of this monograph is to provide an updated research study on the post-war architectural structures that have been functioning at the sites of the main former concentration camp units once operating under the terror imposed on Europe by the Nazi regime of the Third Reich. The study is to present the main types of architectural forms that appeared at those sites after the end of the war. It is also to present basic historical and cultural relations conditioning the process of preserving traces, commemorating and disseminating their history. Furthermore, the aim of the study is to discuss some spatial activities that have yielded some undesirable outcomes, such as destructing the architecture that once used to be a proof of crime and erasing physical traces of the traumatic past. The study also indicates the main tendencies and textures of remembrance that occur in parallel to the layers of historical amnesia. Each site of the former concentration camp has its own complicated history of functioning, starting from the origins of its establishment, through the organisational structure that affected its development, the aim set by the Nazi regime, its operation and liquidation that was related to the relocation of prisoners, to its liberation and the first months after that moment, when a lot of prisoners were still fighting for survival. Social activities aimed at preserving or concealing the memories about the traumatic past come as the subsequent stages in the history of those sites. Today, the architecture that has appeared at the post-camp sites becomes a carrier of their history.

The monograph is focused on the process of creating architectural structures at the sites of the former concentration camps established by the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office. The research work comes as a continuation of the scientific research carried out during the years 2006-2010 and presented in a monograph entitled *Polskie założenia pomnikowe. Rola architektury w tworzeniu miejsc pamięci od połowy XX wieku* (*Polish Monumental Sites. The Role of Architecture in Creating Remembrance Sites since the 1950s*) (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010). The above-mentioned study presents the process of contemporary (after 1945) transformation of monumental art, focusing on the projects implemented in Poland. The monumental sites discussed in that monograph include remembrance places established at the former Nazi German concentration and

extermination camps which remained in the territory of Poland after the end of the war: Auschwitz, Bełżec, Majdanek, Treblinka and Stutthof. These sites come as the examples of innovative transformation of monumental art created with the use of interdisciplinary artistic instruments. The above-mentioned study presents them next to some other commemorative monuments to prove the occurrence of a process of redefining Polish monumental art after the Second World War and also to indicate that architecture has increasingly contributed to the creation of physical carriers of collective memory.

Having recognised a dynamic situation in contemporary monumental art, the Author has posed a question whether this phenomenon refers to all the areas of commemorating the past. The search for an answer has naturally resulted in expanding the Author's scientific interests onto the question related to the variety of collective memory carriers appearing at the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps located outside the territory of Poland.

The primary aim of the research leading to the publication of this monograph is to provide the characteristics of the architecture of the monumental sites established in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps, starting from the year 1945. It is also to juxtapose the analysed and implemented projects with the discourses of contemporary monumental art. In accordance with the preliminary assumptions, the study is to confirm a thesis stating that redefining a formula of a monument – typical of the development of monumental art after the Second World War – refers also to the projects implemented at the discussed sites. The intended aim has been underlain by a belief that the main architectural activities related to the reorganisation of the space marked by the suffering of thousands of human beings, should be connected - first of all - with the commemorative function. Furthermore, considering their traumatic past, these sites should mainly incorporate objects that serve commemoration or presentation of historical events. Based on the analysis of the history of the post-war spatial and architectural development of the post-camp sites, the preliminary research carried out in the discussed field has indicated that the commemorative function applied at those places has not been focused mainly on implementing monumental forms. Commemoration of the traumatic past has not always been the priority aim pursued by the institutions responsible for the administration of the post-camp sites. The former Nazi concentration camps form a specific type of space that eludes any comparisons. The analysis of the post-war spatial development of the structures of the main KL units indicates that the commemorative function implemented there is characterised by historical changeability. The process has occurred with various intensity and often in hierarchical dependence on the implementation of other functions, such as military, penitentiary, residential or industrial ones. The development of the analysed sites has actually consisted in the formal setting of architectural concepts on an axis, from the ideological preservation of the memory about the past and sacralisation of the areas associated with it, to the gradual blurring of its image. Hence, the secondary aim of this monograph is also to provide an analysis of architectural transformations of the post-camp sites, to identify the types of utility functions that have appeared there and to indicate cultural, political and sociological factors that have contributed to such transformations. Taking the theory of architecture into account, the analysis is focused on the function and the form of the former KL structures modified after the war and architectural objects implemented in the process of commemoration. Presenting several levels of the utilitarian functioning of the post-camp sites indicates the attitudes of the particular social groups toward the past related to the Nazi concentration camp system.

The areas of the former Nazi concentration camps are described as a physical space, where the social memory about the past has been visualised with the use of various methods. The aspect related to the possibility of commemorating the particular units of the former Nazi concentration camps as an entire system is also discussed in the study.

The activities undertaken by the Author have led to the identification of the contemporary condition of the sites of the former concentration camps that operated under the authority of the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office. In the last part of the study, the typology of the basic functions according to which the post-camp sites are currently used is provided. Also, the role of architecture in the process of shaping those sites has been discussed. Despite the fact that the visualisation of the past of each former camp has got its own individual character, the Author has made an attempt at providing a typology of the functions performed by the architectural structures that appeared after 1945. The presentation of methods applied to shape the monumental sites and other forms of spatial transformations that have been performing functions other than commemorative since the liberation from the Nazi administration, makes it possible to learn much more about their legacy and the impact they have on contemporary times.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The monograph presents an attempt made at analysing architectural transformations at the sites of the former concentration camps and the units of immediate extermination (extermination camps) established by the German National Socialism regime during the years 1933-1945.

As the network of the units related to the concentration camps was too extensive to analyse all its elements, the analysis is focused

on the sites of the main units, where the Third Reich regime used to implement its policy of concentration and extermination. In a common approach, all the units established by the Nazi regime are considered to be extermination camps, because in every single one of them mass annihilation was taking place through inhumane living conditions, slave labour that was destructive for human organisms, terror and systematic executions. It is often forgotten that the Third Reich authorities followed a specific typology of the imprisonment sites, based on the characteristics of their operation and their position in the hierarchy established by the SS-WVHA. From the administrative perspective, the most important were concentration camps marked with a KL acronym (German *Konzentrationslager* – KZ). Other concentration camps, such as forced labour camps (German *Arbeitslager*), displaced prisoners camps (German *Durchgangslager*), Germanisation camps for children (German *Kinderlager*), prisoner-of-war camps (German *Kriegsgefangenenlager*) and extermination camps (German *Vernichtungslager*) were cooperating with the main units in the administrative and organisational interdependency. The analysis presented in the monograph refers to the process of commemoration at the historical sites where the main units used to function, having been given the status of the concentration camps by the German Concentration Camp Inspectorate and after 1942 - by the D Department of the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office (German *Amtsgruppe D – Konzentrationslager – SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt*). Some basic information on this topic has been found in the following publication: *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945* (Megargee Ed. 2009; Megargee, Dean, Hecker Eds 2012).

The study presents the history of the sites of the former extermination camps, because - although those units had been administratively excluded from the concentration camp network – their operation came as a consequence of the policy pursued by the Third Reich. Numerous studies frequently place the sites of mass extermination outside the KL scheme, which results in the marginalisation of their history. In the analysis of architectural transformations at the sites associated with the Nazi terror, it is impossible to avoid discussing the history of the space where the most atrocious crimes were committed. Hence, the Author's scientific interests also include Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg, Gross-Rosen, Herzogenbusch (Vught), Hinzert, Lublin (Majdanek), Mauthausen-Gusen, Mittelbau-Dora, Natzweiler-Struthof, Neuengamme, Plaszow, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, Stutthof, Warschau, Wewelsburg (Niederhagen) and the mass extermination camps in Treblinka, Sobibor, Kulmhof and Belzec. The units such as Kauen, Riga-Kaiserwald and Vaivara are not discussed in the monograph, because it has been impossible to access any scientific publications on the post-war transformations observed at those sites of the former concentration camps.

In his book, *KL. A History of Nazi Concentration Camps*, published in Poland under the title of *KL. Historia nazistowskich obozów koncentracyjnych* in 2016, Nikolaus Wachsmann descibes the history of the German Nazi terror, starting from its origins, through its particular stages and ending with the post-war fate of the concentration camp units functioning under the authority of that regime. Wachsmann considers his work to be a manifestation of his protest against a fragmentary approach toward the history of the KL system, which can be observed whenever the history of the particular camps is discussed, without any references to the entire network supervised by the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office.

This monograph is to prove that despite their common history and origins, the sites of the former concentration camps have been so far developed in an individual way, without the reference to any universal rules of use and without any comparable means of artistic expression that would allow us to perceive them as equal parts of one genocidal system aimed against humanity. Established and controlled by the Third Reich, concentration camps came as an implication of the murderous organisation. Therefore, presenting concentration camps as a system and a tool used by the Nazi regime reduces distortion and prevents over-interpretation.

1.4 Research problems

The architecture discussed in this research study is approached as broadly defined involvement into redevelopment of the space, in order to create a place understood as a carrier of remembrance about the past important to the society. It is the art of spatial design that is focused not only on single constructional objects but also on the process of developing a physically defined site. Architectural project implementations may function as remembrance carriers, coming first of all as a testimony of the reality of the commemorated events. The condition of an object informs about the time distance separating the viewer from the past events, and its constructional structure, materials that have been applied and its functional layout allow the viewer to grasp a partial image of its historical use.

Architectural objects may also come as a type of "packaging" for the preserved structures that are important from the perspective of heritage. Properly designed buildings become metaphorical „containers" (Lenartowicz 2011) that protect the ruins of historical buildings, remains of constructional infrastructure and physical traces that are

remnants of the past. Their architectural forms may provide some background that emphasizes artefacts as the main composition elements, in order not to overpower their symbolic values. They can also add new meanings to such artefacts. Formed by the metaphorical architectural structure, the interpretation of the past has recently become a significant discourse in the contemporary theory of architectural design. According to some theoreticians, the extension of the Jewish Museum in Berlin designed by Daniel Libeskind is a better formula of commemoration than a traditional monument (Huyssen 2009: 456). A building has got formal possibilities to switch to the interpretative language useful in historical exhibitions. The narrative research studies mentioned by Anna M. Wierzbicka (2013: 10) present a building or an urban complex as a way to tell a story about events from the past. *The semantic aspect of an architectural object refers to the viewer's knowledge, memory and emotions, whereas the physical structure affects behaviour and is perceived with the senses* – some specific "laboratories of psychological architecture" are created to take over the functions of a monument (Lenartowicz 2011: 637).

Architecture is to serve the process of physical commemoration of the past in the present moment, through spatial compositions that consolidate activities related to sculpture or landscape architecture. This idea raised a lot of doubts in pre-war theoreticians (Giedion 1968: 19), however in the 1950s and 1960s, some pioneers of art integration, such as Jerzy Sołtan and Oskar Hansen, already suggested solutions to spatial structures that assumed interaction of various forms of art (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2007). Contemporary project implementations that are based on the cooperation of architects, sculptors, landscape designers and exhibition displays have already become a standard.

In this monograph, architecture is presented as a course of transformations occurring in the physical space. Commemoration of the history of concentration camps *in situ* is a process stretched over time. A series of collective memory carriers that are formed there creates an architectural composition of commemorative complexes. They remain in a mutual, formal dependency and they are full of ideological references – they come one after another, as some complement to the articulation of previously unmentioned values or they replace and verify those values. Architecture, as the art of material space organisation, plays a very important role because it provides means of expression that are useful for that purpose.

1.5 Methodology of the Research

The considerations presented in this monograph are of interdisciplinary nature. Following the mainstream of cultural research studies, they are mainly based on a methodology related to the theory of architecture. The considerations refer to ideological concepts applied in design that is based on the assumptions of the history of architecture. The synthetic and comparative methodology presents the constructional structures discussed in the monograph as spatial compositions created with the use of architectural components. Mentioned in the study, the social perception of the particular project implementations is presented with the reference to the opinions provided by art critics, press accounts and data informing about the growing social interest in commemoration sites after their transformation. Presented in the analysis referring to the design process of monumental sites, the synergic approach takes the influence of various political, sociological and cultural conditions into account, because architecture, as an interdisciplinary field of science, also refers to experience obtained from humanities. The main research activities have been focused on a method related to a multiple case study. Its main advantage is the repeatability of the research procedures and a possibility of comparing results obtained in various cases (Ćwiklicki and Plich 2018: 4).

To fully present the process of architectural transformations at the sites of the former concentration camps, the particular project implementations and their conceptual assumptions have been analysed, along with administrative, artistic and scientific activities that have been undertaken there. As a result, an attempt has been made at providing the characteristics of the discourses on the visualisation of the past at the sites directly related to historical events by suggesting a typology of various kinds of architectural transformations.

Carried out at 14 objects that have been implemented at the sites of the former concentration camps, the site visits and field studies constitute a highly significant stage of the research discussed in the monograph. The analysis of the architecture of the post-war sites of the former camps is included into the field of visual culture research, […] *the subject of which comprises all the forms of visual representations created in human culture* (Sztompka 2006: 7). Scientists use photographs as a part of their research projects. They also use interpretation of visual materials as a critical methodology applied in scientific research on visibility because […] *pictures can show things that cannot be expressed with words, therefore, they can be used as the material developing, reinforcing or complementing the outcomes of the research* (Rose 2010: 301). The main functions of photographs that are applied in the studies on the theory of architecture are also partially referred to in sociological research studies and they involve stimulation of attention and imagination, heuristic inspiration, recording, documentation, descriptive inventory of visual facts (Sztompka 2006).

Collecting photographic and drawing documentation has

made it possible for the Author to develop some graphical models useful for interpretative work during the subsequent stage of the research. It has also allowed the Author to specify the research problems, after visiting the architectural objects *in situ*.

Some materials dedicated to visual research were collected during the site visits in 2008. These materials include photographs taken at Treblinka, Chełmno-on-the Ner, Oświęcim, Bełżec, Rogoźnica and Lublin. The field studies were continued in 2011, during a study tour around the monumental sites implemented at the former concentration camps in Germany: Bergen Belsen, Dachau, Flossenbürg, Sachsenhausen. After the preliminary analysis, the field studies were continued in order to complete the research materials. In 2016 the field visits were paid to Mauthausen, Buchenwald, Stutthof and once again to Sachsenhausen, due to some modernisation work carried out there in the meantime.

The field studies were selected as a research technique because the data accessible in the literature describing the present spatial development of the post-camp sites needed verification. The field studies allowed the Author to take photographs and to collect additional materials, such as information publications produced by the museums. Hence, the analysis of the process of commemoration and architectural transformations in the space analysed in the research is based on the data more reliable than the data provided by contemporary literature, which has been balancing on the boundary between historical research and messages of collective memory since the end of the war.

1.6 Status of the Research

Based on the literature studies, the preliminary research has allowed the Author to determine the research problems and the scope of the analysis and also to develop a scheme presenting the development of commemorating the main KL units. The literature review has been largely focused on the scientific studies published in Polish, English and German.

The history of architectural transformations occurring at the main former units of the KL system has been continuously observed and documented. Archiving the information on the camp constructional infrastructure was started at the moment of the liberation of the camps from the SS authority. Under the framework of internally operating investigation committees, the Allied armies prepared documentation files that presented the condition of the camps found by the soldiers entering those sites. The documents included, first of all, the numbers of victims and descriptions of the prisoners' health condition. There was also information about the buildings and construction infrastructure found at the camps. The records were also complemented with photographs, films and aerial photographs. The archival materials and physical evidence of the committed crimes were usually sent to the country whose army liberated the camp. Most of the data was made accessible to scientists at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, allowing them to present a new approach toward the history of the operation of the Nazi concentration camps and to start a series of publications describing previously unknown aspects of the genocidal system (Caplan, Wachsmann Ed. 2010; Wachsmann 2016).

The review of the literature on the history of the sites of the former KL system indicates that despite the fact that there are numerous common factors resulting from the characteristics of the sites and their historical context, the process of transforming the architecture of the former extermination camps is usually considered in an individual way, without any references to the entire crime industry under which they used to function. The post-war fate of the particular camps was characterised by various intensity and its course did not always include all the aspects of their operation. The advancement level of the historical research depended on the country where the post-camp sites were found after the war, its war experience and its political situation in Europe after 1945. At a small number of the post-camp sites, there were museums and archives established within the framework of their former infrastructure to collect historical testimonies. The first unit of this kind was established within the boundaries of the former KL Lublin (Majdanek) in November 1944. In 1947, under the Act of 2nd July on the Commemorating the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and Other Nations, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum was established in Oświęcim. Next to the newly established units, a few publishing companies started to operate, providing serial publications on the current status of the scientific research work carried out at the sites, and disseminating accounts of former prisoners and witnesses of the events related to the operation of the KL units. This group of periodicals includes, for example, *Zeszyty Oświęcimskie* (*Journals of Oświęcim*) (since 1957), *Zeszyty Majdanka* (*Journals of Majdanek*) (since 1965), and *Stutthof. Zeszyty Muzeum* (*Stutthof. Museum Journals*) (since 1976).

There is extensive literature describing the process of transformations at the former KL Auschwitz (Rawecki and Rawecka 1997; Świebocka 2001; Rawecki 2003; Wóycicka 2009; Sawicki et al. 2015, Lachendro 2016), particularly with the reference to the organisation of a design contest for the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism in Auschwitz-Birkenau in the years 1957-1962 and the impact of its results on the further history of monumental art (Murawska-Muthesius 2002; Pietrasik 2010; Tarnowski 2011). For many years, the KL Auschwitz has been elevated to the synonym of the Holocaust, hence the current condition of its physical space raises a lot of common interest and its functioning in the modern culture

becomes the subject of numerous considerations in various publications, in the view of different scientific disciplines (Huener 2003; Young 2009; Ed. Kucia 2011; Zubrzycki 2012; Steinbacher 2015).

Established in 1945, the State Museum at Majdanek has been also carrying out a lot of scientific research, so its history also systematically contributes to the collection of scientific studies on the transformations of the spatial development of post-camp sites, describing stages and methods of exhibition design (Olesiuk and Kokowicz 2009; Kranz 2011; Olesiuk 2011; Szychowski 2011; Banach 2014). Some collected data has been disseminated in a form of information brochures and guidebooks (Kowalczyk-Nowak 2014). The institution also publishes studies on the history of commemorating the former extermination camps in Bełżec (Kuwałek 2010) and Sobibór, because those commemoration sites are the administrative branches of the State Museum at Majdanek. The scientific activities currently carried out at the museum branches operating at the post-camp sites have resulted in the publication of some detailed historical studies on the post-war development of Treblinka (Kopówka 2002, Rusiniak 2008; Kopówka and Zasłona 2013; Ed. Kopówka 2015) and the KL Stutthof (Benter 1977; Owsiński 2013; Grabowska-Chałka 2014). Intensified quite recently, the scientific research carried out by the museum branches established *in situ* has already resulted in numerous publications providing information about the extermination sites that have been so far scarcely discussed in scientific literature, for example: the Kulmhof am Ner extermination camp (Pawlicka-Nowak 2007; Pawlicka-Nowak and Adamska 2014) and the Gross-Rosen concentration camp (Konieczny 2002; Danko 2011)..

In the 1990s, in a new political context and with a clearly observed increase in the interest in the past, especially in the history of the Second World War, scientific research on the history of the concentration camp system has been intensified. The fact that numerous archives in the Eastern European countries were made accessible and that extensive, comprehensive scientific research was commenced by international interdisciplinary scientific teams, largely contributed to the publication of new studies presenting previously unknown contexts in the history of the Nazi camps. Archaeological research work was also carried out at the sites of the former extermination camps to provide further insight into their history and to verify the data on the spatial development of these sites at the times when the crimes had been committed. Such research work was carried out, among other places, at Bełżec (Kola 2000), Treblinka (Sturdy Colls 2012; 2015) and Sobibór (Bem and Mazurek 2012).

Typical of the recent decades, the intensification of scientific research in the field of the history of the KL system and its post-war history can be also observed outside the territory of Poland. There is extensive literature on the history of developing the site of the KL Dachau, the very first Nazi camp in the KL network (Hoffmann 1997; Marcuse 2001, 2005). Following the increased interest in the former extermination sites among tourists, some popular scientific publications have appeared, including guidebooks for those who are interested in genocide tourism (Mitchell 2012).

After the German reunification, as a result of a new historical policy pursued at the post-camp sites, new museum units were established and they also commenced their scientific activities. It soon resulted in a number of scientific publications on the history of the particular Nazi concentration camps and their post-war development. Some significant scientific studies were published as a result of activities undertaken by such institutions as Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora (Overesch 1995, Knigge et al. 1997, Knigge 2000; Wagner 2003), Stiftung Brandenburgische Gedenkstätten (Morsch 1995; Morsch and Reich 2005) and Stiftung Bayerische Gedenkstätte (Skriebeleit 2011; 2016).

Activities carried out by the museum scientific centers of the global impact have also resulted in a vast collection of historical data and, consequently, in multi-volume publications, such as *The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopaedia of Camps and Ghettos, 1933–1945* (Ed. Megargee 2009; Eds Megargee, Dean, Hecker 2012).

Most publications on the history of the particular Nazi concentration and extermination camps provide some detailed descriptions of their operation as execution scenes and their post-war fate. However, the comparative studies of several or even more sites considering various approaches toward their spatial development as commemoration sites, museums or scientific research centres, have been very scarce so far. A large number of monographs on the development of commemoration sites at the Nazi extermination camps provide an analysis of the units established against homogeneous cultural background – they usually refer to the project implementations that have appeared within the post-war borders of Poland (Wóycicka 2009, Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010) or Germany (Knigge 1996, 2000; Klei 2011; Klei et al. 2011). Most publications are focused, first of all, on the analysis pertaining to the history of commemoration at the particular sites.

Commemorative iconography at the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps comes as the main theme in scientific publications edited by James E. Young (1993; 1994 Ed.; 2000), a prominent scientist, whose interests are focused on the condition of contemporary monuments. However, it is approached mainly from the perspective of art dedicated to the commemoration of exterminating Jewish people.

The process of commemorating the camps that are located within

the post-war borders of Poland is also discussed in monographs on the work of artists involved in the acts of artistic creation implemented at the particular extermination sites. The monographs come as records of inspiration that has eventually resulted in the ultimate forms of monuments. They also present precious memories of the artists, providing some insight into the process of implementing their conceptual assumptions. The context of implementing monumental sites at the former KL Lublin (Majdanek) and KL Stutthof is meticulously elaborated in the discussion of Wiktor Tołkin's creative achievements (Smolarz 1970, Howorus-Czajka 2010; 2012). The description and analysis of the Commemoriation Site at Treblinka are referred to in the presentation of Franciszek Duszeńko's artistic achievements (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2011; Kaja et al. (Ed.) 2014) and the characteristics of the monumental site in Bełżec can be found in a monograph on Zdzisław Pidek's artistic work (Józefowicz and Kulazińska-Grobis 2008).

Some scientists have been also interested in formal considerations on the concepts of monumental sites that are planned for implementation – for example, there is a number of publications on a monument that is going to be constructed at the former KL Gross-Rosen, according to the concept developed by the Nizio Design studio (Chrudzimska-Uhera 2008, Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2011c). So far, the most extensive study presenting the history of commemorating the post-camp sites within the post-war Polish borders is *Polska rzeźba pomnikowa w latach 1945–1995* (*The Polish Monumental Sculpture in the Years 1945-1995* (1995), a monograph by Irena Grzesiuk-Olszewska. The author describes the history of the most significant post-war implementations of monumental art in great detail. A lot of information and reflections can be also found in the studies by Halina Taborska (2002; 2003) on artistic formulas of commemoration applied at the sites of the former extermination camps.

A frequent subject discussed in scientific papers and monographs is the design of museum buildings and methods of modern exhibition of historical data (Williams 2007; Arnold-de Simine 2013; Fabiszak and Owsiński 2013; Ed. Kranz 2017). In the recent years, the aspect of using the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps as museums has been given a lot of consideration during interdisciplinary conferences, such as *Stutthof 2.0. Pamięć, twórczość, ekspresja* (*Stutthof 2.0. Remembrance, Creativity, Expression*) (Sztutowo 2012); *Między interpretacją a kreacją. Negocjowanie znaczeń w (nie)miejscach (nie) pamięci* (*Between Interpretation and Creation. Negotiating Meanings at (Non)Remembrance (Non)Sites* (Sztutowo 2015), *Current Research on Auschwitz History and Memory* (Kraków 2017). Unfortunately, the question of using the architecture of exhibition objects is rarely referred to as a subject of theoretical analysis during such conferences.

The aspect of the historical policy providing the background to the reorganisation of the spatial structure of the former Nazi concentration camps has been elaborated on the basis of abundant literature that emerges from the mainstream of scientific research on the presence of the past in modern times. *Today, culture lives under the sign of Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory and the mother of the muses* (Abramson 1999). Scientific research on the past has currently become a strong trend in humanities. Scientific analysis refers not only to historical data currently discovered but also to the ways in which the society refers to the events from the past and to the forms of visualising the past in the presence. Memory is indicated as a phenomenon formed individually, in a social group, in a political or cultural contexts. It is an object of interest to interdisciplinary projects that approach the problem from, among others, sociological, historical and anthropological perspectives.

In the 1980s, it was possible to observe a growing interest in the subject of memory in the public discourse (Saryusz-Wolska 2014: 224). At the beginning of the 21st century, a phenomenon referred to as a memory boom became the subject of a separate analysis (Winter 2007; Saryusz-Wolska 2011; Karner and Mertens 2013; Arnold-de Simine 2013). This tendency has been fostered by the growing amount of scientific research, as well as by the development of the Internet. Historical knowledge has become more and more common due to various portals and digital publications. The popularisation of the themes related to commemorating, remembering, non-forgetting and admonishing takes place at various levels of cultural activities, and mutually interacting influences result in augmentation, defined by Andreas Huyssen (2003) as the *hypertrophy of memory*. This phenomenon occurs on such a large scale that some theoreticians have already mentioned formal abuse of the perspective of scientific research oriented toward the past (Berliner 2005; Karner and Mertens 2013).

Searching for the origins of the growing public interest in the past, some theoreticians often emphasize the impact exerted by the hecatomb of the Second World War on the development of culture in the 21st century. In his *Le lieux de mémoire* (1984), Pierre Nora advances a thesis stating that whoever talks about memory these days, they mean the Shoah (the Holocaust). There are also some opinions that the turn toward commemoration was commenced earlier, at the beginning of the 20th century. It was growing along with the trauma related to the loss suffered by the western civilisation during the First World War. Referred to as the Great War of 1914-1918, the war contributed largely to the common mourning in the countries directly involved into the conflict. The question of a dignified burial for millions of soldiers, who had died in combat, contributed to the considerations on in-

dividual and collective commemoration (Winter 2014). The stream of considerations on the functioning of the past in the present times was introduced by some concepts presented by such thinkers as Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson and Marcel Proust (Winter 2006 in: Blair et al. 2010: 11). However, it was Maurice Halbwachs, a famous French sociologist, who pioneered in presenting a framework to the notion of collective memory (French *mémoire collective*), which functions along with individual memory as the group awareness of historical events (*Les cadres sociaux de la memoire* 1925; *La mémoire collective* 1939). Halbwachs' work was largely popularised after the war, after his death at the KL Buchenwald, where he had been sent for defending a Jewish person from deportation to the concentration camp.

The publication of *Les Lieux de memoire* by Pierre Nora (1984–1992) triggered further considerations in the academic circles. In his book, the French sociologist changes the perspective of perceiving the notion of a remembrance site and extends it beyond physical carriers, such as monuments, museums and cemeteries, onto each person, event, idea or notion around which memory is built. He also allows memory to be approached in a multi-layered and interdisciplinary way. Scientific research on the phenomenon defined in such a way has been carried out by numerous scientific teams in a lot of countries, contributing to the rise of some characteristic trends in the analysis of this subject. Étienne François and Hagen Schulze (2001) make an attempt at the systematisation of the discussed subject against German cultural background in their *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte.* In Poland, commemoration sites are analysed as the space of collective memory (Szacka 2006), from a perspective strongly focused on the history of the Second World War (Kwiatkowski et al. 2010). There are also transboundary studies, where common ties are searched for in the collective memory, as in a study by Peter Carrier (2006), presenting an analysis of common features in the memory landscape, based on the example of the French and German historical policy. Another example of transboundary studies is a three-volume joint monograph *Polsko-niemieckie miejsca pamięci* (*Polish-German Commemoration Sites*) (2013–2016) edited by Robert Traba and Hans Henning Hahn.

This monograph does not come as an attempt at describing a concentration camp as a remembrance site, in accordance with definitions currently formulated in humanities and social sciences. Considering the architectural approach, a remembrance site is a real, geographical space that is historically related to the past events recognised by the society as deserving commemoration and preservation, as the legacy for the future generations. The dependence of the research referring to the picture of physical transformations at the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps on humanities, which are usually focused on the research studies on the past and its presence in modern times, is of dichotomous nature. On one hand, it is impossible to carry out the research on transformations in the development of post-camp sites without the analysis of their historical background and their political, cultural and sociological contexts. On the other hand, a chronological juxtaposition of the visual articulation of collective memory may become one of many points to learn about the functioning of the concentration camps as a tragedy in the social awareness. Hence, in this monograph, there are numerous references to the research results obtained by the scientists who specialise in various scientific fields. The interdisciplinary approach allows for the discovery of some previously undetermined interdependencies between historical policy and the function that has been attributed to the post-camp sites after the war.

The studies on the development of the post-war historical policy in Poland (Wóycicka 2009), in Germany (Saryusz-Wolska Ed. 2009; Wolff-Powęska 2011; Zaborski 2011), in France (Gildea 2002; Rousso 1991, 2004; Carrier 2006) and in the global approach (Lagrou 2004; Judt 1992, 1996, 2002) have largely contributed to this monograph by providing a lot of knowledge significant to the scientific research carried out by the Author. In all the above-mentioned publications, the monuments are described as concentration and visualisation of activities undertaken to develop an official image of the memory about the past related to the Second World War. Due to the analysis of the political and social contexts in the particular European countries in the years 1945 – 2015, it has been possible to describe their relations with the subsequent stages and types of architectural transformations of the post-camp sites. A schematic description of the commemoration characteristics and their dependence on the state policy is presented by Nikolaus Wachsmann (2016) in the epilogue of his monograph *KL: Historia nazistowskich obozów koncentracyjnych (KL: the History of the Nazi Concentration Camps)* and also by Harold Marcuse (2010c), who indicates in his studies several typical ways of using the post-camp sites during the first months after their liberation. In this monograph, the theme is developed further by discussing additional case studies and covering an extended time range.

Focused on the functioning of the image of the past in the contemporary society, scientific research has provided a broad context to the studies on the development of physical commemoration formulas. They allow for the understanding of processes and impulses that have led to particular administrative or artistic activities related to the creation of a commemoration site. The intensified presence of the elements from the past in science and social life has also sparked interest in monumental art as related to activities that directly visualise memory about the past in the public space. Similarly to memory,

monuments are a popular theme of contemporary scientific studies. Their formula, which has been dynamically transformed since the end of the Second World War, becomes a scientific interest in an interdisciplinary approach. Monuments are of interest not only to scientists focused on the history of fine arts (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995, Taborska 2003, Ożóg 2014) but also to historians (Winter 2006, 2014; Praczyk 2015), to culture experts (Young 1993, 1994, 2000) and to sociologists (Posłuszny 2014). As a physical form emphasizing the attitude presented by a larger community toward the past, a monument has been formally included into a much wider range than the means of artistic representation offered by sculpture, which is traditionally attributed to monumental art. Commemoration project implementations are also analysed from the perspective of the theory of architectural design. Scientific studies presenting considerations about the role of architecture in the process of formulating commemoration sites were published as early as in the 1960s and 1970s, following the implementation of some large-scale monumental sites (Olkiewicz 1967; Smolarz 1970; Szafer 1971); however, this subject has also sparked a lot of particular interest in the 21st century (Young 2000; Kabrońska 2008; Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010; Lenartowicz 2011; Klei 2011; Wierzbicka 2011, 2013; Posłuszny 2014).

After the review of the literature referring to the transformations at the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps, a conclusion has been drawn that - so far - there has not been any monograph published to describe architectural project implementations at the post-camp sites of all the main KL units not only in Poland and Germany but also in Austria, the Netherlands and France.

1.7 Structure of the Study

The monograph consists of several parts. The first part comes as an introduction to the discussed subject. It presents the origins of the research problem and the main objectives of the analysis that has been carried out by the Author. It also presents the scientific theses and a description of activities undertaken to confirm them. In this part, a general characteristic of a Nazi concentration camp, presented as a cultural symbol, is discussed. It also confirms the timeless relevance of scientific research carried out in the discussed field.

The second chapter provides a schematic description of the functioning system of German Nazi concentration camps. Based on the results of contemporary historical research, the characteristics of that system are discussed along with its development stages and organisational and administrative interdependencies observed between the main KL units. The second chapter also provides some necessary background to allow the reader to understand the extent to which the contemporary buildings constructed in the post-camp areas relate to their original architecture and its functioning within the entire network of the concentration camp units managed by the Third Reich regime.

The next chapter presents the analysis of processes related to architectural modifications at the sites of the former Nazi camps, typical of the discussed time range (1945-2017). The modifications are discussed with particular emphasis on spatial activities undertaken to preserve memory about the dramatic past of those places. The time range covered by the analysis is divided into the following stages:

the time period directly related to the act of camp liberation;

years 1945-1949, when the question of influence exerted by the states managing the Allied occupation zones in Germany and the states where the post-camp sites were situated after the establishment of the post-war borders was a significant factor;

the 1950s to the 1990s, when the historical policy pursued by the particular countries was strongly affected by the games played between the two poles of the global politics during the Cold War;

the 1990s to the first decade of the 21st century, when transformations of the political systems in Central and Eastern Europe and the establishment of the European Union were of the highest significance to the formulation of memory.

Describing the history of commemorating the concentration camps which are now located within the borders of different countries, the third chapter is to confirm the thesis stating that the transformations of the post-camp sites occurred with various intensity and characteristics, depending on the historical policy pursued by their post-war administration authorities. This assumption is based on Aleida Assmann's theory (2007:14), stating that considering a global approach, memory in Europe works with various constellations of national memories and their interactions.

The fourth chapter presents a discussion of 14 monumental sites developed in the areas where the Nazi concentration and immediate extermination camps operated during the Second World War (considering their characteristic differentiation in the process of commemoration, the former sites of Auschwitz I and Auschwitz-Birkenau are discussed separately, despite the fact that during the war they formed one organisational unit). The photographs taken during the field visits in the years 2008, 2011 and 2016 are included in the multiple case study. The research studies focused on more than one case foster cross-sectional analysis (Ćwiklicki and Plich 2018).

Each project implementation is visualised as a separate sub-chapter. The visual materials on the particular former concentration camps are presented chronologically, depending on the date of their estab-

lishment by the Third Reich administration. This scheme has been assumed to prevent any controversies that could rise if the systematics were based on the hierarchy of importance of the units in the SS system or on the significance of the particular sites to modern culture.

The photographs are provided with concise descriptions referring to the history of the functioning of the particular camps and the main stages of their spatial organisation, with no interpretation but with short encyclopaedic notes. At the end of each sub-chapter a graphical scheme of the contemporary spatial development of the particular post-camp site is provided. The maps have been developed on the basis of the satellite images generated from the Google Maps Internet website and plans presented in the information materials that are provided by the museums and inventories made during the field visits at the post-camp sites. Those models have been created to indicate the methods according to which the historical urban layouts of the former execution sites have been adjusted to the commemorative function. They depict the particular commemoration tracings which – through the architecture of the monumental site – have been superimposed on the places which are unique to the history of mankind.

The last part of the monograph presents an analysis of the discourse and a semiotic interpretation which are related to the contemporary spatial organisation of the sites of the former Nazi concentration camps. It presents the basic utilitarian functions of the construction objects located there and the forms of architecture that function at the site, such as a necropolis, a proof of the crime committed at the site, a monument, a museum, a scientific research centre, a place for educational meetings and a tourist product. The utilitarian functions of the space which is not substantially related to the processes of commemorating its history are also listed in this part of the monograph.

The architecture commemorating the fate of the victims of a concentration camp comes as a very important element in the history of its post-war functioning. The analysis carried out in this field not only allows for the presentation of the results of the policy pursued by the Nazi regime and the crimes it committed but it also determines historical and geopolitical changeability related to the interpretation of the past.

1.8 Summary

Basic research in the field of architecture is to determine how a design process looks like, why it is initiated, what its objectives are, what course it follows and what principles function in this process at a normative level (Niezabitowska 2014: 152). In this monograph, the analysis of spatial sites including architectural structures, sculpture installations and urban compositions that appeared at the places of the main units of the former Nazi concentration camps after the war, leads to the comparison of the previously mentioned project implementations under the political and cultural conditions. It also allows the Author to present a typology of the main functions performed by the architectural objects related to the process of commemoration or to the activities undertaken to achieve quite the opposite aims.

More than seven decades of visualising the past at the post-camp sites come as a time span that requires scientific research but also allows for drawing constructive conclusions. Monumental sites are significant carriers of collective memory. Their own history, as cultural artefacts inspiring collective memory because of their strong emotional and physical links, is actually started on the day of their establishment. James Loewen (2007: 22–26) indicates three basic stages of the functioning of physical commemoration forms. The first stage is an artistic narration about the past, an event or a person – everything that is related to its origins. The second one is a story about the founding of a monument and its functioning in the public space. The third stage presents its current image and its perception from the perspective of the contemporary cultural contexts. This classification should also include an aspect of physical transformations of a commemoration site and changes that have occurred there between the time of its establishment and the present (Blair et al. 2010: 30).

The monograph does not extend the research studies on collective memory considered from the sociological perspective. It approaches a commemoration site as a space that has been physically determined. It provides an analysis of commemoration practices, focusing on material and architectural visualisation of the past in the contemporary cultural context. The functioning of a remembrance site, where an event or a person is commemorated, has been also extended to include practices related to the blurring of the past image based on historical facts. An increased scope of knowledge about the forms of architectural transformations and transformations of design assumptions related to those processes allows the Author to present a more complete picture of the Nazi system of concentration camps that has been functioning in culture since 1945. It also makes it possible to answer the questions about the situation of the post-camp sites in the contemporary reality and about the further paths for their prospective structural transformations.

II.1 Location of the main German Nazi concentration camps in the territory of the Third Reich and the occupied countries in 1944.A map elaborated on the basis of an illustration in *Concentration camps in Nazi Germany. The new histories*, J. Caplan, N. Wachsmann Eds. London–New York 2010; author: A. Gębczyńska-Janowicz

2 Historical Background - the System of German Nazi Concentration Camps

Before analysing the history of the post-camp architectural structure and the commemorative architecture after 1945, it is advisable to discuss the history of the establishing and the functioning of the most important units managed by the Concentration Camp Inspectorate. So far, the functioning of concentration camps in the social awareness presents them mainly as individual entities – not as a complex of terror units operating in a network under the administration of the Third Reich regime.

Established by the NSDAP administration under Heinrich Himmler's command, the first objects were located in the motherland territory of the Reich. As more and more territories became occupied during the Second World War, concentration camps started to appear in the occupied countries, among others, in Poland, Austria, France, Czechoslovakia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. During the time of the concentration camp operation, in the years 1933-1945, approximately 2.3 million adults and children were imprisoned there. Most prisoners (about 1.7 million) lost their lives in those camps (Wachsmann 2016: 14). The highest number of victims, over 1 million people, died at the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, which since 1942 had been functioning as the immediate extermination camp. According to the estimated data, mass extermination claimed the lives of 1.5 million people. It also took place at specially dedicated extermination camps, where the Nazis sent mass transports of Jewish people and other ethnic minorities from all over Europe to find death in the gas chambers.

None of the camps in the system initially supervised by SA members (German *Die Sturmabteilungen der NSDAP*), and later by SS soldiers (German *Die Schutzstaffel der NSDAP*) came as a replication of previously established units. Although all of them were established in the system managed by the same administration, there were two model structures developed for their spatial organisation – first at Dachau and then in Sachsenhausen. Each KL unit, however, operated in its own, individual mode. With the evolution of the Nazi regime, the inflow of prisoners was increasing and the internal system of segregation was gaining more and more importance. Exercising terror by solitary confinement became more systematic and inhumane. Month by month, the machine of industrialised extermination was gaining its momentum (Wachsmann and Caplan 2009: 15). The practice of using a drastic punishment system became even more enhanced with the migration of the SS units. The experience gained from actions involving the serial killing of ill prisoners and Soviet prisoners of war contributed to the development of some makeshift infrastructure dedicated to mass extermination of Jewish people, already applied at Chełmno-on-the Ner and improved at Bełżec, Treblinka and Sobibór (Montague 2014).

Presented in this chapter, a schematic description of developing the concentration camp system is provided as historical background to further analysis of the post-war architecture of the former concentration camps. The data has been obtained mainly from *KL. A History of Nazi Concentration Camps* by Nikolaus Wachsmann (2016). In his previous study, Wachsmann (2009: 18) presents a general outline of the history of Nazi concentration camps. He distinguishes six main stages in the transformation of the camp network: establishing the first camps (1933–1934); formulating and coordinating the units (1934–1937); expanding (1937–1939); war and mass killing (1939–1941); economy and extermination by labour (1942–1944); the peak and the fall (1944–1945). Presented in such a way, this division comes as a simplification, however, it certainly allows the reader to realize the dynamics of the evolution that the camp system was going through against the background of other events during the Second World War.

The first stage took place simultaneously with the early process of the formation of the Third Reich regime. Adolf Hitler's way to dictatorship, his ideology and the programme declared by the NSDAP were supported by the escalation of violence in political actions. Next to propaganda, terror became the main instrument of reinforcing the power exercised by the National Socialism movement. Dozens of thousands of political opponents were killed, persecuted or sent to prisons that were still being established without any organisational system, usually in buildings taken over by the party representatives in major German cities. In 1933 in Dachau, in the outskirts of Munich, the first German Nazi concentration camp was established. It was instituted by an order of the chief commander of the Munich police at that time,

Heinrich Himmler, to isolate members of the German anti-Nazi opposition. The first interned prisoners were people considered by the NSDAP administration as individuals unfit (German *Asoziale*) to live in the utopian formula of the great nation. The first KL unit was developed without any previously set administrative regulations and guidelines on its spatial organisation. The situation changed after Theodor Eicke had been appointed the camp commandant. Under his command, the SS garrison started to introduce the murderous system of administration based on exercising deadly terror on prisoners. This method was later on replicated and mastered in other concentration camps.

The development of the future organisational system had to take an orderly form, because Himmler had noticed some advantages of so-called concentrating internal enemies at isolated prison units. As the SS chief commander, he became the main instigator of establishing the subsequent camps. Theodor Eicke, who started supervising work of the Concentration Camp Inspectorate (German *Inspektion der Konzetrationslager – IKL*) at the end of 1934, became responsible for the coordination of the newly established camps. Intensified activities undertaken by the SS to secure the interests of the NSDAP resulted in an increased demand for the infrastructure suitable to intern enemies. The camps were filled with prisoners classified by the regime as communists, Masons, criminals and – along with intensified racial persecutions in Germany – Jews. A growing number of prisoners generated the need of building new units. The development was politically and financially supported by the Chancellor of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler himself. As opposed to the chaotic organisation of the KL Dachau, next camps came into existence according to some specified procedures. New units, such as Sachsenhausen (1936) and Buchenwald (1937), were organised in accordance with a programme previously developed by the IKL. They became meticulously planned death towns, prepared for spatial and organisational modifications. Himmler enthusiastically defined them as the modern model camps. The management procedures were thoroughly systematised, along with the camp architecture. Organisational modifications were followed by segregation of prisoners. Prison uniforms were marked with symbols, depending on groups to which prisoners were assigned to by the SS soldiers.

In 1937 there were approximately 7 000 people imprisoned in the Nazi concentration camps, however, the infrastructure implemented there was intended to expand. Less than a year later, 50 000 people were imprisoned in the KL units (Wachsmann 2015: 630). In mid-1938 new camps were established, among others, in Flossenbürg and Ravensbrück and after the annexation of Austria – in Mauthausen.

Excluding people unfit to live in the new state from public life, the SS administration noticed the economic potential behind the exploitation of the forced labour system. Camp prisoners were used for slave labour in order to develop German industry. The construction sector was particularly important because of Hitler's far-reaching plans of developing Berlin and other German cities. Supervised by Albert Speer, the Third Reich architect, the design projects required considerable sources that could supply construction materials, so concentration camps and their satellite administrative units started to be based next to quarries and brickyards.

In 1938 mass arrests of German Jews were commenced. Persecutions began rapidly, initiated by the events of the so-called Crystal Night (the riots against Jewish people, instigated by the totalitarian authorities). Almost 30 000 people of Jewish origin were imprisoned in concentration camps – mainly in Buchenwald, Dachau and Sachsenhausen. By that time, they had already become a group of prisoners most severely persecuted by the SS garrison members.

At the beginning of 1939, concentration camps were prepared as logistic support units to the armed conflict planned by Hitler. When the Second World War broke out, there were six main concentration camps operating in the Third Reich: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Flossenbürg and Ravensbrück. As the further occupation of the subsequent countries unfolded, covering the territories of Poland (September 1939), Denmark (April 1940), Belgium and the Netherlands (May 1940), foreign prisoners also started to appear in concentration camps. Having conquered France (June 1940), the Nazi Germans imprisoned several thousand Spanish people, who fled their country to escape persecutions of General Francisco Franco. Nevertheless, the largest national group consisted of Poles, who had been suffering German repressions since the very first month of the occupation. As a result of the occupation policy, mass arrests were carried out among representatives of intelligentsia, clergy, scientists and academic teachers. Actions such as *Intelligenzaktion* and *the Extraordinary Operation of Pacification* (German *Außerordentliche Befriedungsaktion*) were intended to murder those people in mass executions or to send them to concentration camps. In 1940, 70% of all the prisoners in the KL Ravensbrück were Polish people and in the KL Dachau there were over 13 000 Poles (Wachsmann 2015: 200–201).

Mass deportations of citizens of the occupied countries resulted in severe overcrowding in the existing concentration camps. Hence, some new units were established at that time. Some camps were located as the SS penitentiary facilities near the borders of the occupied countries. Additionally, the Concentration Camp Inspectorate authorities and the Reich Security Main Office were looking for areas that would allow them to develop camps as the sources of forced labour. Operating since 1938 in the vicinity of the Netherlands and Belgium, a

sub-camp of the KL Sachsenhausen in Neuengamme was transformed into an independent concentration camp, where prisoners were forced to work at a brickyard. Located near the French territory, the KL Natzweiler used to function as a base for the granite quarries, similarly to the KL Gross-Rosen near the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the General Governorate (Wachsmann 2015: 205).

At the end of April 1940, Himmler gave an order to establish a camp in Oświęcim, a little town in the occupied territory of Poland, with an intention to imprison Polish opposition members there. It was the beginning of the most infamous Nazi concentration camp – the KL Auschwitz.

The main reason for expanding the concentration camp system outside the Third Reich borders was Hitler's desire to settle German citizens in the occupied territory of Poland. The plan assumed that its current inhabitants would be deported, forced to slave work for the growing empire and members of any resistance movements would be exterminated. This was the main reason for establishing the KL Lublin, today known as Majdanek.

In the second half of 1941 the need of expanding prison sites grew even stronger, forced by the outcome of the Barbarossa operation involving the invasion of the Third Reich on the Soviet Union. Some concentration camps were turned into prisoner-of-war camps. Most of dozens of thousands of Soviet prisoners of war who were imprisoned there died. The high mortality rates were caused by particularly brutal treatment of prisoners and also by less than miserable living conditions. For instance, in Bergen-Belsen several thousand Soviet soldiers were kept outside in autumn and winter, with no accommodation whatsoever.

At that time, living conditions at concentration camps became even worse. Increasing brutality of the camp garrisons, overcrowding, exhausting labour, low food rations and frequent epidemics of various diseases resulted in soaring mortality rates. Some reports after the inspections carried out by the RSHA indicated high numbers of prisoners who were unable to work. It was the reason for mass extermination of sick prisoners organised by the IKL and carried out under the *Action 14f13* cryptonym. The second operation recommended by the Nazi authorities, Action *14f14*, referred to the extermination of Soviet prisoners of war who were imprisoned in the camps. According to some approximate data, during the years 1941-1942 about 38 000 Soviet soldiers were murdered (Stone 2015: 11). Both operations were based on the practices acquired during the organisation of an eugenic programme, involving sterilisation and extermination of people considered by the government institutions as disabled (at that time, it was referred to as *Action T4*). As a result, thousands of people died in gas chambers, were shot or poisoned. The experience in mass killing and processes developed to remove bodies were prepared by the camp garrisons to facilitate mass extermination. Still, that was not yet the intended pursuit of the so-called final solution to the Jewish question (in German: *Endlösung der Judenfrage*) (Montague 2014; Wachsmann 2016).

Battles fought by the Reich army on the Eastern Front forced the intensification of work in the field of the arms industry. Focused initially on the implementation of Hitler's dream about modernisation of German cities, slave labour had to be at the service of the immediate needs of the army. A high percentage of prisoners were forced to work in the production of military equipment. In 1943 new camps were established, among others, the KL Mittelbau-Dora, which was subordinated to an underground plant where V2 rockets were produced. The initial concentration of workforce on armament plants was soon changed into labour in the satellite sub-camp system and the network of units was being expanded continuously. Labour conditions at the plants were organised in accordance with the intentional policy of annihilation through labour (in German: *Vernichtung durch Arbeit*), contributing massively to a huge increase in the mortality rates among prisoners.

In March 1942, while reorganising the SS, Himmler established the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office (*SS-Wirtschafts- und Verwaltungshauptamt – SS-WVHA*) under the supervision of Oswald Pohl, who had so far been responsible for the organisation and administration of the concentration camps. The cooperation between the SS and German economy was intensified. The concentration camps combined the extermination of European people with the German pursuit of economic gain (Wagner 2009: 127–148)..

At the turn of 1941 and 1942 the history of Nazi concentration camps reached the stage they are most often identified with at present – the stage of mass racial persecution of civilians and their extermination at centres dedicated particularly to this purpose. Held on 20th January 1942 at Wannsee, a conference of the leading representatives of the German National Socialism officially legitimated the action followed by a programme that was later on euphemistically referred to as the "final solution to the Jewish question." The Nazis started to establish camps with the infrastructure that now had to meet the needs of meticulously planned genocide. The first extermination unit appeared in Chełmno-on-the Ner, even before the arrangements in Wannsee. In December 1941 the SS-Sonderkommando Kulmhof started its operation. The unit was created upon an order given by Arthur Greiser, the governor of the Reishgau Wartheland, in order to solve "the local problem" (Montague 2014: 20). The next three units were established under the so-called Reinhardt Action, under the supervision of Odilo Globocnik, the SS commander in the Lublin district of the General Governorate. At the extermination camp in Bełżec, which was established in March 1942, about 450 000 people

were murdered (Kuwałek 2010: 172). In Sobibór camp that had been operating since May 1942 a number of murdered prisoners reached an approximate level of 180 000 up to 220 000 (Bem 2014) and in Treblinka, between July 1942 and November 1943, about 700 000 – 750 000 people were sentenced to mass extermination (Kopówka 2011: 114). The victims were mainly Jewish people transported by rail from the territories of Europe occupied by Germany or countries that were in alliance with the Nazi regime. Soon the genocidal system was joined by the KL Auschwitz – today a synonym of the Holocaust.

In 1943, in some occupied towns, the Germans started to transform Jewish ghettoes that they had established before into concentration camps. It happened in, among others, Riga (KL Kaiserwald), Kaunas (KL Kaunas), Vaivara (KL Vaivara), Warszawa (KL Warschau) and in Kraków (KL Płaszów). Jewish inhabitants became prisoners who were forced to do cleaning work in ghettoes or to provide forced labour at industrial plants located in the vicinity.

The defeats of the German troops on the Eastern Front forced them to withdraw from the occupied territories. The closer the fall of the Third Reich was, the higher numbers of prisoners could be observed in the concentration camps. In August 1943, about 224 000 prisoners were officially registered in the main KL units. A year later those numbers were doubled and in January 1945 the camp administration registered almost 714 000 prisoners. These numbers do not include prisoners who had not been registered (Wachsmann 2009: 32; Blatman 2009: 126).

As the line of the Eastern Front was shifting, the concentration camps were successively liquidated and prisoners were transported to other units to provide labour force to the arms industry. The camp garrisons left the sick and the unfit to work behind. Evacuation actions were carried out in a hurry, with no food supplies and in very low temperatures. One of the first mass deportations was ordered by the authorities of the KL Majdanek in spring of 1944. In winter 1945 the highest wave of mass transports could be observed. Almost 100 000 prisoners of the KL Auschwitz and KL Gross-Rosen came to the interior of the Reich on foot, transported by lorries or by rail (prisoners from the KL Stutthof came by sea). The third and the most deadly wave came in spring 1945.

The last months of the war were the hardest for all the prisoners of the concentration camps. The chaotic process of evacuating prisoners, today referred to as death marches, overcrowding and rapid outbreaks of infectious diseases resulted in a sudden increase in the number of deaths. It is estimated that out of 700 000 prisoners who were registered in the camp at the beginning of 1945, over 1/3 did not survive to see freedom. Historians refer to this stage as the last phase of the Nazi genocide (Blatman 2009: 167).

The growing loss of the Wehrmacht allowed the Allied armies of the anti-Hitler coalition to liberate the first concentration camps. The Red Army entered the KL Lublin on 23rd July 1944. Successively, the following concentration camps were liberated: the KL Auschwitz (27th January 1945), the KL Gross-Rosen (14th February 1945), the KL Sachsenhausen (22nd April 1945), the KL Ravensbrück (30th April 1945) and the KL Stutthof (9th May 1945). In spring 1945, American soldiers liberated the KL Buchenwald (11th April), the KL Flossenbürg (23rd April), the KL Dachau (29th April), and the KL Mauthausen-Gusen (5th May), and British soldiers brought freedom to the KL Bergen-Belsen (15th April 1945) and the KL Neuengamme (4th May 1945).

Signed by the Nazi Germans on 8th May 1945, the capitulation did not actually end the dramatic history of the sites where the concentration camps had been functioning. For prisoners, the liberation of the camp meant the salvation from the Nazi terror, however, it did not free them from the consequences of their imprisonment at the extermination sites (Stone 2015: 28). After the liberation of the camps, the health condition of their former prisoners was critical. Very few of them were strong enough to greet their liberators. Thousands of prisoners did not even realise that the freedom was coming because of their poor health condition. Most of them quickly died of various diseases and physical exhaustion. During the subsequent months, in the KL Bergen-Belsen liberated by the British, almost ¼ out of 60 000 prisoners staying in the barracks could not be saved, despite the best efforts made by their liberators. The process of healing and recovery of former prisoners might have taken from a few weeks to several months. Frequently, former prisoners who managed to recover remained at the camp to decide where and how to search for a place for their future life. Not everyone chose to return to their homeland. A lot of people from the eastern countries that found themselves under the authority of the Soviet Union, decided to stay at their previous imprisonment places for a longer time. At the sites of the former concentration camps some new units were then being established – *Displaced person camps* (*DP camps*). The largest ones were organised in Dachau and Bergen-Belsen and they survived until the 1950s. After the war, in Germany there were thousands of people who wished to return to their homeland or to start looking for a new one. It is estimated that 750 000 people liberated from the concentration camps, 6 million forced labour workers, who had been brought to work at farms during the war, and 2 million prisoners of war were all migrating around Europe at that time (Marcuse 2009: 188 in: Weinmann 1990).

The history of the Nazi concentration camps still continues to be the subject of detailed scientific research that allows for realisation of some new contexts of the genocidal system operation. Despite an opulent collection of literature written after the Second World War, there

are still gaps that require scientific research, dissemination and commemoration. Nikolaus Wachsmann (2016) provides the examples of strategic operations coded by the SS administration as *Action 14f13* (a programme of exterminating concentration camp prisoners with mental disorders and physical disabilities) and *Action 14f14* (a programme of exterminating Soviet prisoners of war in the Nazi camps) and indicates them as a field for further scientific and historical analysis. The operation modes implemented at the concentration camps in the initial years of their functioning are also less known, similarly to the little known operation of the camps organised in Jewish ghettoes, established by the Nazis in the territories of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Research studies on the fate of prisoners who had been considered by the Nazi regime as criminals (German *Berufverbrecher*) or so-called antisocial individuals (German *Asoziale*) are also very scarce. The history of the Soviet camps established under the framework of the concentration camps liberated from the Nazi authority still remains largely unknown, although some publications have already appeared, bringing some new valuable data into the daylight (Łuszczyna 2017).

A schematic presentation of the history of the operation of the German Nazi concentration camps indicates how complex the thematic scope actually is. Various contexts are superimposed one onto another and they become difficult to interpret in modern times. Depending on the zone of political influence in post-war Europe, where a particular camp found itself located after the liberation, its original architecture was preserved, destroyed or adapted to perform new functions. Commemoration sites established *in situ* were created in various cultural contexts and in the dynamically changing political situation at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Only some units of the former Nazi concentration camp system were left within the post-war borders of Germany. The analysis of commemoration comes not only as a step toward introducing a typology of modern art, but it also provides valuable information on the formula of collective memory developed after the war..

In numerous publications discussing the common historical theme of the functioning of the KL units, there are some differences that signify a dynamic progress in the field of historical scientific research carried out in the recent decade and different ways of formulating research theses. This fact directly affects the process of commemoration and architectural design of post-camp areas. At the historical sites of Nazi crimes, the subsequent layers of architectural structures overlap to introduce a narration for the currently discovered information on the genocidal crimes committed by the Nazis.

3 Impact of Historical Policy on the Way of Transforming the Architecture of the Former Nazi Concentration Camps

3.1 Introduction

Thousands of units included into the concentration camp system established by the Nazi regime during the years 1933 – 1945 were spread in the territories of Germany and the countries it was occupying. Nowadays, the physical forms of spatial commemoration can be observed only at a few sites – and there are even fewer places where historical architectural structure has been preserved. It results from the way the discussed objects were used in the first years after the war. The commencement of the commemoration process depended, first of all, on the social and political contexts. The initiatives to build a monument or a bigger architectural site to commemorate victims of KL units were usually started by associations of former prisoners. However, their influence was often not enough to preserve as much as possible from the historical condition of the site. Frequently, decisions about demolition of the camp infrastructure were caused by pragmatic issues or by the lack of funds to carry out conservation activities.

An important factor which should be taken into consideration in the scientific research on the post-war architectural transformation of the post-camp sites is the historical context. Depending on the time scope, the places discussed in the monograph have been used in a variety of ways and the architecture has followed various functional formulas. While considering activities undertaken at the post-camp sites, the stages related to the political context should be also analysed. Based on the chronology of the post-war historical events, it is possible to distinguish several time periods when the activities of the crucial significance to the contemporary condition of the post-camp sites took place:

- the turn of 1944 and 1945, the first months after the camp liberation;
- the years 1945 – 1949, when the countries responsible for the administration of the Allied occupation zones in Germany and the countries within the borders of which the camps were located after the war had the decisive influence on the spatial transformations of the former Nazi concentration camps;
- the decades from the 1950s to the 1990s, the time of the Cold War – the tension sensed in political relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, together with the countries under its ideological, economic and military influence (among others, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria), and the countries associated under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) with other countries of the Western Bloc (including, among others, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany);
- the time period after 1989, when the political systems in Central and Eastern Europe were transformed and some countries decided to form and join a new economic and political association, namely: the Europea Union.

The characteristics of the functional staging did not refer to all the camps in the same way – only in some cases, the use of camp facilities followed similar assumptions. This chapter presents a description of cultural, political and social influence affecting various approaches toward the question of the post-war usage of the former Nazi concentration camps and the way of their architectural development.

3.2 The turn of 1944 and 1945 – the First Months after the Liberation of the Camps

The post-war architectural transformations of the sites of the former concentration camps largely depended on the political situation of a country within the borders of which the former extermination places were located after the war. The administration related to the army that had liberated a particular camp usually decided about the first months of the camp operation after the war. Hence, the administrative authority over the KL Bergen-Belsen was taken by the British Army, the KL Dachau and the KL Flossenbürg were managed by the American Army and the administration of the KL Auschwitz and the KL Lublin was in the hands of the Soviets. Some camps, for example, the KL Buchenwald and the KL Mauthausen had been liberated by American soldiers but after those sites were included into the Soviet

occupation zone, the responsibility for the camp infrastructure was transferred to the administration of the Red Army.

Concentration camps were liberated from their Nazi garrisons starting from July 1944 to May 1945. Concentration camps based in the eastern countries occupied by the Third Reich were gradually left by their German garrisons, upon the news about advancing troops of the Red Army. Prisoners were transported in great numbers to the units located further in the territory of Germany. While leaving the camps, SS soldiers destroyed the main evidence of the committed crimes. Gas chambers and crematory furnaces were blown up, buildings accommodating archives and warehouses with the property stolen from prisoners were burnt down. Soviet soldiers entered partially demolished camps, supervised only by some reduced groups of guards. The liberators usually found devastated infrastructure and hundreds of prisoners who were mostly close to their death.

Ten days after the liberation of the KL Lublin (Majdanek), a committee was appointed from the soldiers of the 69th Army of the 1st Belorussian Front. The committee carried out an official site visit, made an inventory of the objects and drew a schematic map of the former camp. The data collected at that time indicated that the constructional camp infrastructure was in a good condition. However, it was soon demolished to a large extent. The devastation was not prevented by the quick establishment of a museum at the post-camp site in 1944. Providing legal protection to the infrastructure of the former KL unit in 1947 by the Act on Commemorating the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and Other Nations in Majdanek did not prevent the process of destruction either. The fact that during the first five years after the war the site served as the military area for the units of the Red Army and later on also for the Polish military divisions, largely contributed to the gradual demolition of the original buildings. Unattended by soldiers, the camp infrastructure was partially looted by local residents who used the stolen wooden and cast iron elements as building materials. Such activities and some other actions undertaken in the KL Lublin later on, already under the conservation protection, resulted in the fact that out of 280 historical objects constructed until 1944, about 70 elements of the historical infrastructure have survived until the present day (Kiełboń and Balawejder 2004).

Similarly to the situation in Majdanek, Soviet soldiers entered the KL Auschwitz already abandoned by its German garrison. Most prisoners had been relocated in death marches months before that to the units located in the territory of the Third Reich. In Birkenau, there were only about 7 000 prisoners left; they were ill and physically exhausted. The camp infrastructure was taken over by the Red Army, whose soldiers were accommodated there to November 1945. Shortly after the liberation, the Extraordinary State Commission of the Soviet Union for the Investigation of Crimes of German-Fascist Aggressors was appointed to investigate the condition of the post-camp areas. Later on, starting from April, the work intended to secure the evidence of committed crimes was carried out by the Commission for the Investigation of German-Nazi Crimes in Oświęcim. After that the post-camp infrastructure was passed to the disposal of the Ministry of State Reconstruction. The material recovered from the demolition of the wooden barracks was given to the state institutions (the army, special services) and private individuals. As a result, today at the site of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, there are only a dozen original prisoner barracks left out of over 200 of those objects (Cywiński 2016: 14).

The liberation of concentration camps was the time when a process of the gradual devastation of their original architecture was commenced. The negligence during the last difficult months of their functioning contributed to the deterioration of the buildings and other infrastructure. The post-war chaos could only worsen that condition.

The knowledge about the condition of the architecture at the particular units of the Nazi concentration camp system can be found in documents that have been recently declassified. These are photographic and drawing inventories that were collected by the armies of the anti-Nazi coalition shortly after the liberation of the camps. Today, they are used by museology specialists to present the characteristics of the concentration camp buildings in the areas where there have not been many original artefacts of the constructional infrastructure left after more than seven decades.

3.3 The Years 1945 - 1949 - the Allied Occupation Zones in Germany and in the Countries where Camps were Located after the Establishment of the Post-war Borders

Harold Marcuse (2010c) indicates five main ways of using former concentration camp sites in the first months after their liberation: medical treatment of former prisoners, organisation of displaced person camps, organisation of penal education places for local residents, prisons for the former Nazi garrison members and NSDAP representatives, establishment of museums to preserve the evidence of crimes and to prevent the sites of mass extermination and hundreds of satellite subcamps from fading away and oblivion. Upon various decisions made by its temporary administration, the post-camp architecture started to change. In most cases, new adaptations resulted in blurring the original character of the places where atrocious crimes had been committed.

3.3.1 Adaptation of Camp Buildings to Convalescence Facilities Dedicated to Former Prisoners

In most camps, the first weeks after their liberation were spent on providing convalescent care to former prisoners. Their health condition was tragic indeed. The last months of the functioning of Nazi concentration camps were characterised by soaring mortality rates. Murderous mass transports organised by the garrisons of the eastern camp units to move emaciated prisoners to the camps in the central part of the Third Reich resulted in heavy overcrowding in prisoner barracks. Consequently, already harsh hygienic and sanitary conditions got even worse, so outbreaks of various epidemics occurred frequently. Moreover, the organisational chaos and panic among the SS garrison members contributed to the intensified aggression toward prisoners. The last stage in the functioning of the concentration camp system is considered to be the most dramatic time for prisoners. While entering the camps, soldiers of the Allied armies were met by stacks of corpses and thousands of exhausted people at the verge of death.

The camp architecture was quickly adjusted to the procedures undertaken to prevent further deaths. Wooden prisoner barracks were demolished to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Some makeshift field hospitals were quickly constructed. Former prisoners were provided with medical treatment in the former SS garrison buildings and some military tents dedicated to that purpose. It took several weeks for the Allied armies – unprepared to provide humanitarian aid – to overcome the sanitary chaos and to arrange some acceptable conditions for the convalescence of former prisoners. Civilians and medical staff were brought from Great Britain to Bergen-Belsen to provide medical care to the multitudes of sick former prisoners. Despite all the efforts, during the first months after the liberation 13 000 survivors died because of contagious diseases and famine emaciation (Wachsmann 2016).

3.3.2 Former KL Units of as Temporary DP Camps for Post-war Migrants

Simultaneously to the organisation of medical care provided in military tents and brick buildings of the former camp administration, the adaptation of other buildings was also taking place to provide temporary accommodation to those in need. Intensified by the migration of people returning from war exiles, the post-war chaos resulted in a strong need of establishing displacement person camps. Some DP camps were organised under the infrastructure of the former concentration camps. Organisational and economic support was offered by the *United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration* (*UNRRA*). However, this situation referred mainly to the units located in the American and British occupation zones in Germany. After 1945, the area of the former KL Bergen-Belsen became the largest DP camp for Jewish refugees in Germany. Bergen-Belsen (Hohne) DP camp became a place of temporary residence for over a dozen thousand people, before they started their journeys home or emigrated to search for a new homeland. Initially, refugees lived in prisoner barracks but after their demolition, people were moved to the buildings where the Wehrmacht soldiers and the SS garrison members had been based. This form of adaptation survived until the beginning of the 1950s.

In other former KL units, DP camps for refugees functioned for a much shorter period of time. At the site of the former KL Neuengamme, a DP camp was functioning only for a month after its liberation. In Flossenbürg, former prisoners, who were mainly Polish people, were accommodated there as refugees until 1947 (Marcuse 2010 c: 188–189). The buildings of the former KL Dora provided accommodation to convalescent prisoners until winter 1945. Later on, some relocated German refugees from Czechoslovakia found shelter there for a few months. In summer 1946, the authorities of Nordhausen decided about disassembling the barracks and moving them to the ruined town districts (www.buchenwald.de/pl/574/).

The area of the former KL Dachau provided accommodation for its former prisoners only for a short period of time. After the liquidation of the American prison in the autumn 1948, an idea of a residential area in the post-camp site was to be implemented. The Bavarian government decided to establish a housing estate there for almost 600 families. Most inhabitants were refugees of German origin from Czechoslovakia, who had been relocated under the provisions of the Potsdam Conference. The flats were organised in the modernised barracks and subsequently, a school, a shop, a medical dispensary and a cinema were arranged there as well. In the historical building of the former delousing facility a restaurant was opened. It was often referred to as "At the Crematorium" (Wachsmann 2016: 680). The residential area existed for almost 15 years until the time when the associations of former prisoners eventually succeeded in their fight for transforming the area of the former camp into a commemoration site.

In most former concentration camps, the adaptation of prison buildings for residence purposes was of temporary nature. However, in some cases, the post-camp architecture is still used for residential purposes today, for example, among others, in Flossenbürg, Gusen and Vught.

3.3.3 Transformation of Former Camp Buildings into Objects Fostering Self-help Initiatives of Former Prisoners

A branch of the *Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners* (*Polski Związek Byłych Więźniów Politycznych*) in Gdańsk suggested an unusual function for the site of the former KL Stutthof. In summer 1946, the Association applied for the administration rights to the properties included in the post-camp area to save the surviving buildings by assigning them with a new function that could serve to and foster self-help initiatives undertaken by the Association members. Next to the commemoration site, a recreation centre for former prisoners and demobilised soldiers of the Polish Army was planned. The sanatorium function was assigned to the former SS administration buildings. Other examples of using the infrastructure related to the Nazi terror to foster self-help initiatives put forward by associations of survivors could be also observed at other places in Poland.

Some prisoners, still during the time of their imprisonment, had believed that a proper commemorative formula was a form of a "living monument", namely: an institution performing utilitarian functions that would keep the memory about the past alive. One of the former Auschwitz prisoners, Jacek Marecki, remembered some conversations among the prisoners about the idea of establishing a vocational boarding school for war orphans in the selected post-camp buildings (Wóycicka 2009: 70). Among other ideas, the representatives of the regional branches of the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners also suggested organising sanatorium facilities at the former Gestapo headquarters (the *Palace* villa in Zakopane) and some schools in the buildings that had been constructed outside of the main layout of the camp (the Lagererweiterung zone in Oświęcim).

In the first years after the war, activities oriented toward providing welfare support to former prisoners, their families and orphans of the camp victims strongly outweighed the need for transforming the post-camp areas into commemoration sites (Wóycicka 2009: 68–69; 260–261). At that time, architectural activities served utilitarian purposes first of all.

3.3.4 Using the Architecture of Crime in the Process of Penal Education Organised by the Allied Armies in Post-war Germany

The shocking scenes presenting the horrifying existence in the Nazi concentration camps immediately triggered a strong need for retaliation in soldiers of the Allied armies, who were liberating those sites – even if it was to be done in a symbolic way. In some cases, the retaliation took the form of penal education imposed onto German residents. On several occasions, soldiers of the Allied armies forced local residents to confront the nightmare of the camp that had been functioning next to their villages and towns for many years. Those who lived in the vicinity of a concentration camp had to participate in marches around the extermination sites and experience dreadful sights of emaciated and sick prisoners or piles of corpses stacked next to the barracks. Such controversial trips were organised by the American Army, for example, in Weimar. Five days after the liberation of the KL Buchenwald, almost a thousand local residents were dragged to the camp by the order of General George Patton (Wachsmann 2016: 670). Similar orders were given by General Henning Linden who ordered penal marches to the Germans, forcing them to march through the KL Dachau (Marcuse 2005:121). Moreover, German civilians had to take part in the burials of deceased prisoners and also in exhumation of the mass graves. It occurred at the KL Flossenbürg, where local residents were forced to do some tidying work and to prepare the bodies of deceased prisoners for the burial. Those activities, however, brought the results opposite to the intended ones. Taking also other forms, such as intensified public representation of media reports from the liberated concentration camps, the policy of penal education initially caused a lot of shock but also triggered some defense mechanisms (Jaspers 1979:162). Shown at the cinemas before the movies, *Death Mills* (1945, directed by Billy Wilder), a short documentary presenting the scenes recorded by soldiers of the Allied armies after the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps, was considered by German people as propaganda related to the process of denazification (German *Entnazifizierung*). In a gesture of defense, the German nation was turning a blind eye on the tragedy, unwilling to mourn victims and denying responsibility for the committed crimes, as it was expected by the international community (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 201–210). Organised by the Allied, the awareness-raising campaigns did not facilitate the process of commemoration. In most cases, they triggered mechanisms oriented toward erasing traces of the disgraceful past, as it occurred later on in Dachau and Flossenbürg. The original architecture was demolished, and the urban layouts of the camps were blurred during the subsequent modifications and adaptations to the new functions.

3.3.5 Penal Functions Continued at the Facilities Related to the Functioning of the Former Execution Places

After the liberation, the new administration of most former camps decided to continue their operation as prisons. In accordance with the

provisions formulated at the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the representatives of the anti-Nazi coalition divided Germany into four occupation zones controlled respectively by Great Britain, France, the United States of America and the Soviet Union. Hence, until 1949, all decisions about the areas of the former concentration camps were made by the administration authorities appointed for each zone. The further development of the former KL sites was largely affected by the process of denazification that was being implemented as a result of a provision of the Potsdam Agreement by the Allied Control Council in January 1946. A number of activities aimed at removing principles, acts and members of organisations related to the functioning of the Nazi party in the Third Reich from the social life were planned in all the occupation zones of post-war Germany. In the first several years, the former KL units were used as the isolation sites for the former camp garrison members and NSDAP activists. Some objects of the infrastructure in the main units were still used as prisons. The KL Dachau was also used in that way – American soldiers established the War Crimes Enclosure no. 1. Germans arrested by the Allied soldiers were imprisoned there until 1948. Members of other former camp garrisons, among others, of Mauthausen and Buchenwald, and prisoners from the short-functioning prison in Flossenbürg were also sent to Dachau.

Almost 2 500 German civilians were interned in a penitentiary facility established by the French Ministry of Justice. It operated during the years 1945-1948 in the area of the former KL Natzweiler-Struthof. Later on, the area was transformed into a monumental site upon the initiative of the state administration (www.struthof.fr/).

Also the former KL Herzogenbusch (in Dutch: Kamp Vught) and the KL Neuengamme were used as penitentiary facilities during the denazification period. Both sites were adapted for penitentiary centres providing more humane conditions for the next few years. After the war, until 1949, the area of the former KL Herzogenbusch found itself within the borders of the Netherlands. The Ministry of Justice initially intended it to become an internment centre for German civilians and Dutch citizens who had collaborated with the Germans during the war. At the beginning of the1950s, there was also a DP camp for people relocated from the Dutch colonies, for example, from the Malay Archipelago. The facility operated until the 1990s, when the historical buildings were transformed into a housing estate. In 1953 some post-camp buildings were taken over by the Dutch army and the remaining infrastructure was adapted for a correctional facility for juvenile delinquents. Slowly, the military area and the prison expanded their spatial range, transforming the architecture and gradually limiting the access to the former camp infrastructure with high concrete walls. For the administration, such a transformation meant metaphorical rehabilitation and it was a way to provide utilitarian services to the society. However, those decisions pushed the history of concentration camps and crimes committed there into the shadow (Whatmore 2014: 49–51).

In the years 1945-1948, the administration authorities of the British occupation zone established a prison in the buildings of the former KL Neuengamme. This function was continued by the authorities in Hamburg, who decided to reformulate the post-camp infrastructure into a juvenile correctional centre and in 1960s – into a penitentiary facility for criminals (Marcuse 2005: 123). The brick buildings of the former SS administration were earlier used by the Prison Service of the Federal Republic of Germany. The wooden buildings were demolished and replaced by a new prison complex.

In the zone under the Soviet control, NKVD officers established some internment structures, partially modelled on gulags and referred to as Special Camps (German *Speziallager*). Two of them were established in the areas of the liberated concentration camps. In the years 1945-1950, the partially preserved infrastructure of the KL Buchenwald was used for the operation of the Special Camp no. 2 (German *Speziallager Nr 2*) and in the area of the former KL Sachsenhausen the Special Camp no. 7 (German *Speziallager Nr 7*) was established to imprison NSDAP activists, representatives of the Third Reich regime and opponents of the communist system. It sometimes occurred that after the war, prisoners of the former Nazi KL units were imprisoned again in the same camps, but this time under the Soviet administration. The camps were characterised by high mortality rates among prisoners. Overcrowded barracks, poor sanitary conditions and famine contributed to the fact that in three main Soviet camps 22 000 out of over 100 000 prisoners did not survive the imprisonment. The post-war operation of Buchenwald as a Soviet prison claimed about 7 000 victims. At the same time in Sachsenhausen 12 000 prisoners lost their lives. The functioning of those camps was ended when the work done by court-martials was finished and a decision about restoring stabilisation in both German countries was made (Wachsmann 2015: 620–621).

German prisoners of war and NSDAP members were also imprisoned in the former structures of the Nazi concentration camps in the post-war territory of Poland. Those were, first of all, the branches of concentration camps previously functioning as the forced labour camps, for example, in Świętochłowice-Zgoda (1945), Potulice (1945–50) and in Jaworzno (1945–50) (Wóycicka 2009, Łuszczyna 2017). For many years, the history of the functioning of Special Camps had been a mystery. It became better known to the public as late as in the 1990s (Sacha 2013: 179).

From January to May 1945, the NKVD established a prison for German prisoners of war and soldiers of the Polish Underground State in the former KL Warschau. Still, very little is known about the events that occurred in the area of the liquidated ghetto (Kopka 2007).

Today, the post-war history of adapting the former concentration camps for penitentiary purposes is scarcely present in the museum narration at the post-camp sites. Some partial commemoration and presentation of that period in the history of the post-camp sites to the public started at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. In 1995 in Buchenwald, a symbolic necropolis was arranged in a grove situated opposite the main former camp, where 1100 steel posts mark the places where the mass graves of the Soviet prison camp victims had been discovered. Two years later, built into the slope at the northern boundary of the former camp, a museum building was constructed. Its exhibition is dedicated to the history of the Special Camp. A similar museum was built in Sachsenhausen in 2001. The new exhibition building was situated in the vicinity of the mass graves, in the area of the tip of a triangular site of the former camp.

3.3.6 Military Units at Post-Camp Areas

A significant number of buildings in the areas of the former concentration camps were used by military units. It occurred, for example, in Ravensbrück where – except for the part dedicated to the museum purposes in 1959 - the constructional infrastructure was turned into the military barracks operated by the Soviet army until 1994 (in: *Sites of Remembrance 1933–1945*, 2016). Established in the 1960s in Sachsenhausen, the commemoration site also did not allow for a clear visualisation of the former topography, as it referred only to several percent of the former camp area. The rest of the buildings served military purposes of the German army until 1990 (Haustein 2006: 87; Felsch 2014: 44). A similar situation could be observed at some other places as well. In Vught, some area of the former concentration camp was taken over by the Dutch army and was managed by the military administration until the end of the 1980s. In Bergen-Belsen the post-camp area was used as firing and training grounds for the NATO forces (Schulze 2006) until the late 1990s. The presence of the military units in the post-camp areas largely limited the possibilities of displaying the original architectural structure of the former concentration camps. Despite the fact that the military barracks were situated outside the main prison complexes of the former camps, they had been hindering the commemorative processes for decades.

3.3.7 Revitalisation of Post-camp Areas Leading to the Destruction of Historical Architecture

The list of the stages proposed by Harold Marcuse should be completed with a stage involving the process of putting the former execution places to order that not always resulted directly in transformations oriented toward museum or commemoration purposes. Started on the day of liberation, the clean-up work at the main units strongly affected the condition of the infrastructure that has survived to the present day. The processes of cleaning and securing the post-camp areas were carried out in various ways. Some took a form of penal education actions or contribution to various social actions. The priority was to bury deceased prisoners and to secure the mass graves that had been discovered. In some cases, the scale of such a task forced people to apply drastic methods; in order to prevent a sanitary hazard in Bergen-Belsen, the corpses were pushed down to the mass graves with the use of construction earthwork machines.

In the former concentration camps liberated by the British and American armies, German civilians who had lived in the vicinity of those camps, were now engaged to do the clean-up work and to bury deceased prisoners. At the stage of cleaning up the post-camp areas, a lot of buildings were demolished. The material obtained in that way was used as firewood by the military units based there or as recycled material for reconstructing houses by local residents. Sometimes, the entire barracks were removed and transported to the nearby villages to serve as workshops or residential buildings, as it occurred in Buchenwald and Dora.

The post-camp structures were also destroyed because of hygienic and sanitary reasons, in order to prevent epidemics of various contagious diseases that were spreading among former prisoners who were still living in the barracks after the liberation. For that reason, the British military administration of the former KL Bergen-Belsen decided to demolish most prisoner barracks and their infrastructure. The sick were moved to the buildings of the former SS administration. The last prisoner barrack was burned down on 21st May 1945. The event was marked by a simple symbolic ceremony (Wachsmann 2016: 657). During the subsequent months, more buildings were destroyed, including the crematoria and the watchtowers. Also, the stone foundations were demolished and the original urban layout of the camp was slowly fading away (Schulze 2006: 218).

The French military authorities responsible for one of the occupation zones in Germany until 1949, decided to demolish the post-camp buildings in Hinzert and to give them away as recycled construction material. Some areas that had been confiscated by the Third Reich

regime to establish a concentration camp at that site were returned to their previous owners, who soon started agricultural work there. In the place where the former SS administration was based, a honorary cemetery (French *Cimétière d'Honneur*), was established in 1946, where the prisoners' bodies found in the nearby mass graves were then buried. The bodies of the identified French and Luxembourger citizens were buried at the cemeteries in their homelands. Two years later a chapel was built next to the discussed site. Over the years, in the area of Hinzert there have been very few historical artefacts preserved directly evoking memories about the history of the concentration camp that had been functioning in that place (http://www.gedenkstaette-hinzert-rlp.de/).

A considerable part of the infrastructure related to the operation of the former concentration camps was demolished during the implementation of an agreement entered by the Allied countries on the liquidation of German military installations. In 1949, an action carried out under the provisions of that agreement led to the blowing up and closing of the entrances to the extensive underground network of tunnels in the Harz, where prisoners of the KL Mittelbau-Dora had been dying at the production of ballistic missiles. Before closing the tunnels, the equipment of the underground plants related to the technology of the arms industry was disassembled and taken away by American soldiers. After the area was passed under the Soviet administration, further disassembling was continued by the Red Army soldiers (Wagner 2003).

In the areas of the former concentration camps established by the Germans within the pre-war borders of Poland, cleaning and securing activities were at first carried out under the supervision of the Red Army and then under the control of the Polish military authorities. At the sites of the former camps field hospitals were arranged, where former prisoners were staying until their health condition allowed them to go out. Most survivors went to Kraków, where they could receive some aid from Polish institutions, such as the *Office of the Special Commissioner for the Welfare of Prisoners of German Concentration and Labour Camps* (*Urząd Specjalnego Komisarza do spraw Opieki nad Więźniami Niemieckich Obozów Koncentracyjnych oraz Obozów Pracy*), which was established in February. Some former prisoners decided to return directly to their pre-war homes and others were sent to transit camps arranged by the Soviet authorities (such as the one in Katowice-Bogucice).

Some publications referring to the first months after the liberation of the former KL Lublin (Majdanek) mention that the clean-up activities at that site were undertaken in a form of a social action. It was possible to start the clean-up work as late as in May 1947, after the Soviet military units had left that area. The social action was supervised by the Society for the Protection of Majdanek (Towarzystwo Opieki nad Majdankiem) and the State Museum at Majdanek (Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku) established there three years earlier. The support was also provided by the Bishop of Lublin, Stefan Wyszyński. Groups of students, soldiers, workers and members of social organisations were also involved in the action (Olesiuk 2011: 241–242). The soil mixed up with the ashes of the camp victims was collected at one place and formed into a pyramid, which became the central commemoration place for many years (Olesiuk and Kokowicz 2009). Quickly gaining their political significance, both former concentration camps in Auschwitz and Majdanek became sacrum zones at the very beginning. For many Poles, they became pilgrimage destinations in the search of the final resting place of their loved ones (Kiełboń and Balawejder 2004; Olesiuk and Kokowicz 2009: 8). After the war, both camps were distinguished and used by the state administration authorities for political purposes. All the attention referring to the securing of war execution sites was focused mainly on those two sites.

The situation was different in the former KL Stutthof. The absence of prisoners, who had been evacuated by the Red Army to secure the area resulted in the lack of direct pressure that was needed to start the process of commemoration. Also, the lack of family relationships between the former prisoners and local residents contributed to the years of negligence in the process of preserving the historical buildings. The situation was even more complicated by relocation actions carried out in the Żuławy region. Local residents of German descent were replaced en masse by families from Central Poland and the Eastern Borderlands, who did not have any direct bonds with the victims of that Nazi concentration camp (Owsiński 2013: 90–91). In November 1945, when the post-camp site was abandoned by the Red Army units, most of the original buildings were still in quite a good condition, despite the fact that the basic equipment and fittings in the buildings had been disassembled by the Soviet troops (Owsiński 2016). For several months, the post-camp area was secured in relation to work carried out by the *Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes* (*Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich*) (Grabowska-Chałka 2014: 131).

Later on, the original architecture of the former prison blocks was devastated. The organisational chaos that was caused by the fight among various state institutions for the right to the administration over the post-camp property partially contributed to that devastation. However, the most severe loss suffered by the original architecture occurred as a result of so-called "barrack actions". They were organised by the Polish administration and involved the removal of disassembled barracks to various ruined places in central Poland, where the considerable lack of residential buildings was a

common problem. Disassembling work was carried out by the Social Construction Company in the former KL Stutthof and in other post-German properties in the region of Pomerania (Owsiński 2016).

A similar process was observed in the former KL Gross-Rosen, the unit established in 1937 within the pre-war borders of the Third Reich and the post-war borders of Poland. A year after it had been left by the Red Army, the site of the former KL Gross-Rosen stayed abandoned and largely devastated. The need for its protection was reported by the *Gross-Rosen Protection Committee* (*Komitet Ochrony Gross-Rosen*). As indicated in a report provided by a representative of the *Provincial Office of the Reconstruction Department in Wrocław* (*Urząd Wojewódzkiego Wydziału Odbudowy we Wrocławiu*) in 1947, the post-camp buildings were successively disassembled, taken for firewood and treated as recycled constructional material. At that time, only a few prisoner barracks survived in the post-camp area, along with the entrance gate, the crematorium, a watchtower and some fragments of the fence. Upon the request of the former prisoners, a plan for basic preservation of the remaining objects was implemented (Wóycicka 2004: 266–267).

In the area that is now the Polish territory, there was one main KL unit of which no physical traces remain today – the KL Warschau. The camp was functioning from July 1943 to August 1944 in the area of the former Warschau Ghetto that had been liquidated in May 1943. The camp infrastructure was taken over by the NKVD to organise a prisoner-of-war camp for German troops and soldiers of the Polish Underground State. The Soviet camp was closed in January 1945 and its remains were passed under the administration of the *Ministry of Public Security* (*Ministerstwo Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego*) that continued to use it as a prison until 1956 (at first, as the Central Prison - *Labour Centre for Reconstruction of Warszawa* (*Centralny Obóz Pracy dla Odbudowy Warszawy*) and then, from 1949, as the Warszawa *II Gęsiówka Central Prison* (*Centralne Więzienie Warszawa II Gęsiówka*). After the prison was closed, all the construction facilities were demolished. Today, the post-camp area accommodates a park, a housing estate and the building of the *Museum of the History of Polish Jews* (*Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich*) (Kopka 2007).

Some responsibility for the considerable devastation of the camp buildings in Sztutowo, Rogoźnica and Płaszów should be attributed to those who shortly after the war made a decision about the centralisation of the commemoration process. According to that decision, Oświęcim and Majdanek were intended to be the main centres of Polish martyrdom. On 16th December 1947 the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners sent a petition for the establishment of a museum in Gross-Rosen. The petition was answered by the Department of Museums and Monuments of Polish Martyrdom (Wydział Muzeów i Pomników Martyrologii Polskiej) as follows: *No more museums are planned because of financial reasons and also because it is essential to avoid fragmenting the subject of martyrdom in small provincial museums. It should be illustrated in the most complete and documentary way at the three most important centres* (in: Wóycicka 2009: 267). The third centre was supposed to be the *Central Museum of Polish Martyrdom in Warszawa* (*Centralne Muzeum Martyrologii Polskiej w Warszawie*), which was still in its design phase at that time.

Over decades, the State Museum at Majdanek and the State Museum at Oświęcim-Brzezinka competed for the recognition of the post-camp areas under their administration as the central symbol of the national martyrdom. The attention of the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners was also focused on both those museums. Other former Nazi concentration camps functioned on the fringes of various combatant associations' interest and for that reason their infrastructure was gradually neglected. Also, the lack of funds for conservation work and insufficient administrative structures contributed to that process (Ibid.: 238–274). As the only two units in Poland, the above-mentioned museums received legal protection in the form of regulations in 1947. There were not many post-camp sites in other countries that were legally protected by the state administration that was supposed to take care of them during the first decade after the war. According to Harold Marcuse (2010c: 55), the first commemoration sites protected by law were established in Czechoslovakia in Theresienstadt and in Belgium in Breendonk.

Yet, the places related to the system of the Nazi terror that were most neglected by the Polish state authorities were extermination sites. 50 years of oblivion affected extermination camps, where the German Nazis massacred hundreds of thousands of Jewish people. For many years, the immediate extermination camps in Chełmno-on-the Ner, Treblinka, Bełżec and Sobibór had been functioning on the fringes of collective memory, both in Poland and in the world. After the war, as opposed to concentration camps, there were no physical traces of the infrastructure used in extermination camps. While retreating from those areas, their SS garrisons destroyed the buildings and replaced them with agricultural fields. SS-Sonderkommando Kulmhof was liquidated in April 1943 and then again on 17th January 1945, after a short time of resuming its genocidal operation.

In order to cope with the task of destroying the evidence of the committed crimes, a special unit of the SS Reichsführer's Security Service (German *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers-SS* – SD) was appointed. The *Action 1005* (German *Aktion 1005*; also *Sonderaktion 1005*) was a secret operation organised by a special Sonderkommando to destroy

all the traces of crimes committed under the extermination policy pursued by the Third Reich. In 1942, for the first time ever, some gruesome experiments of removing corpses from mass graves were carried out in the Kulmhof extermination camp. Thousands of bodies of prisoners murdered under the programme exterminating Jewish people were burnt on grates made of railway tracks or were torn to pieces by bombs, bones were ground and used as fertilisers (Angrick 2015: 49).

After the war, the unprotected areas of the former extermination camps were penetrated by looters who were looking for valuables inside the mass graves. The authorities were aware of grave robbers' atrocious activities but attempts at preventing them were of highly sporadic nature. Various committees used to come to the post-camp sites to carry out some research on their history but mass graves had to wait for almost a decade for some securing. Devastated areas of the former camps finally received protection and appropriate setting in the form of monumental sites at the end of the 1960s (Rusinek 2008; Kuwałek 2010).

During the discussed time period, the clean-up work was carried out without any long-term strategy. Even if a decision about including a particular post-camp area into a commemoration site had been made on the date of its liberation, it did not mean that its historical architecture would be preserved as a relic of the atrocious past. During revitalisation work, usually underlain by utilitarian reasons, considerable parts of the original buildings were demolished. The large fragments of the post-camp areas were not secured and exposed to devastation or even to sacrilege, as it was in the case of the extermination camps.

3.3.8 Early Forms of Commemoration Architecture

Simultaneously to the activities discussed above, there were also attempts made at designing some proper forms to commemorate tragic events. The first forms of commemorating concentration camp victims appeared already during the first weeks after the liberation and in some cases - even before that time, when the execution camps had been still in operation. Some prisoners searched even for a short temporary escape from the nightmarish camp existence in art. Artistic works often took symbolic forms, such as sculpturing in small objects found during everyday chores. Prisoners had to work in carpentry or locksmith workshops by orders of the SS garrison members. Some guards used prisoners' talents for their own private purposes. There was time for art in the KL Auschwitz too. Artistic works were created under such difficult circumstances and those that have survived are exhibited at the camp museums today.

The first visualisation commemorating concentration camp victims, known to the contemporary scholars, was created at the KL Lublin in 1943, during the functioning of the camp. By the order of the camp Rapportführer (a report officer – an SS-WVHA functionary), some selected groups of prisoners were assigned with the task of aestheticising the space of the prison block quarters. Under that action, a consent had been given for a sculpture that was intended to stand among the barracks. The prisoners made a two-meter concrete column crowned with three sculptures depicting birds. The column head was made by Maria Albin Boniecki, a prisoner of Majdanek, who – after many years - remembered his inspiration for the sculpture as follows: *I made the birds half-doves half-eagles. A dove is a symbol of soul innocence and an eagle is a symbol of our nation and of victory. I bound the birds in a symbol of victory and personified them as a Trinity: a Man, a Woman and a Child, with their feet rested on the Earth globe, of which they take care* (Kowalczyk-Nowak 2014: 15). Despite the artistic design so strongly linked with the Polish sepulchral tradition, the German garrison members accepted the sculpture, because its design could be also interpreted as a reference to the emblem of the Third Reich – an eagle holding a wreath in its talons. The prisoners took advantage of the fact that they were officially allowed to produce the artefact and hid a tin with the ashes of their deceased inmates, which they had collected in the crematorium, inside the column of the sculpture. Thus, the sculpture intended to decorate the camp space, gained the status of a monument among the prisoners. The column has been standing in its original position until the present day. Its head had to be replaced because it was knocked off the column after the liberation of the camp by Soviet troops. Reconstructed in its approximate form, however without instructions provided by its author, the column head returned to its place in 1969 (Olesiuk and Kokowicz 2009; Marcuse 2010a: 56).

Thinking about a formula of commemoration was not rare among prisoners who had been living in the camp hell. It brought hope for the fall of the Nazi regime and the end of the functioning of the extermination sites. A former prisoner of the KL Auschwitz and a sculptor, Wiktor Tołkin, mentions that in his memories. The artist was discussing a hypothetical formula of commemoration with one of his inmates during their imprisonment in the concentration camp. This particular conversation took place after the New Year roll call in 1944: *Marian Toliński came to see me after the ceremony and we started wondering what we would do after the camp, what we would do with those post-camp areas. He said that we should plant a forest and that the forest would tell people what had happened there but I did not agree with him. I thought that some great*

work of art should be created there to properly speak about this matter […]. This was the beginning of thinking about a monument that should be big and spatial (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010: 68). These considerations came as an introduction to the creative process in which the artist participated, contributing to the implementation of the monumental sites in Sztutowo (1968) and Majdanek (1969).

Another prisoner of the KL Auschwitz, Jerzy Adam Brandhuber, an artist painter and a curator of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum from 1947, was also thinking about a monument design. In his concept, the artist envisioned a commemoration site covering the entire post-camp area. The place where the crematoria used to function was to be accentuated as the main point of that large-scale spatial composition. After the war, Brandhuber recalled his idea of a tribute to the camp victims as follows: *I was working on the design of a monument after the war. I had got an official conspiratorial order from my friend, Benek Świerczyna (from the Resistance movement). I finished. It was a giant […] The entire area to the west of the camp in Brzezinka, starting from the crematories, was to be levelled – as one colossal roll call square, numbers and numbers of square kilometres. And in the middle – a massive chimney, rectangular in its cross-section, as in a crematorium – but much, much bigger, some 50-60 meters tall. On the chimney, some stone symbols – roughly cut, set into the chimney on its four sides. The chimney must be visible from a great distance – a great distance. And it should be supplied with gas – to burn like an eternal torch. Night and day. At night, there must be a glow – just like then. And all around, stones arranged in rows, like blocks (prisoners), when they had been standing for a roll call, formed and aligned in divisions, like stones, like urns (not graves, because there were no graves), divisions by ten rows – just like back there, in the camp – 500, 600 prisoners, five, six million stones. They counted in this way then. And among the groups, the space must be empty, not a single blade of grass, not a single tree. And around that, only a row of posts with cannons and lamps on those posts, like pearls in the night, strings of pearls – just like then – kilometres and kilometres* (Jaworska 1975: 50–51, in: Rawecka and Rawecki 1997: 14).

The conversations about the need for commemorating the fate that they also had to share resulted in the fact that the survivors became the main driving force to the transformation of the architecture of the former concentration camps. Some early monuments were created during the first weeks after liberation. They were characterised by a very simple artistic formula. For instance, at the units where some large groups of Polish Catholics were still staying after the liberation, wooden crosses used to be erected. For centuries, this sacral symbol has been functioning in Poland as a national canonical commemoration sign, as a sign of resistance against the occupiers and as a symbol of victory over them (Hoffmann 1997; Zubrzycki 2014). Shortly after the liberation of Majdanek, a number of birch crosses marked the places where the heaps of earth were mixed with the ashes from the crematoria. In September 1945, the *Department of Museums and Monuments of Polish Martyrdom at the Ministry of Culture and Art* (*Wydział Muzeów i Pomników Martyrologii Polskiej przy Ministerstwie Kultury i Sztuki*) appealed for […] *erecting wooden crosses at the places of atrocities committed by the Germans as temporary monuments. Each cross should have a crown of thorns made of barbed wire and a plate, the template of which is available at all the provincial Departments of Culture and Art* (Mazur 2004: 142 in: Kocik 2016: 102). This type of monument appeared in the mid-1940s at the H-Górka[1], at the site of the former KL Płaszów. A similar way of commemoration is still common today. A granite cross with a crown of thorns was placed in 1999 in the former KL Gross-Rossen as a monument dedicated to the memory of Władysław Błądziński, a priest murdered at the camp.

A 10-meter tall cross was set up at the roll call square of the KL Dachau on 3rd May 1945 (the date was selected to additionally honour the Polish national holiday). It was dismantled after several months (Marcuse 2010a: 71). A wooden cross was the first commemoration element also in the area of the former KL Natzweiler. It was put up there in the autumn 1945 by some French associations of survivors. Erected by Polish women prisoners at the KL Bergen-Belsen a few days after the British troops had entered the camp, a birch cross has survived until the present day (on 2nd October 1945 it was replaced by a new wooden cross and this one has been standing there until today). A wooden cross was also set up by survivors of the imprisonment in the KL Herzogenbusch after the liberation of the camp. Two years later, it became a central element of the commemoration site, arranged in a form of a remembrance wall (designed by Johann F. van Herwerden) covered with the names of the murdered prisoners who had been members of the Resistance movement (Pflock).

A more expressive form referring to the Catholic faith was created by the prisoners of the KL Flossenbürg, who mostly came from Poland. Before leaving the camp, they built a Christian chapel of *Jesus in Prison*. For the construction of the chapel, they used stone blocks from a demolished watchtower. Made accessible in 1947, the chapel along with the eastern boundary of the camp and the crematorium located several dozen meters away, formed a compositional axis of the commemoration site, which is now referred to as the *Valley of Death*. In

[2] The hill derived its name from the Unterscharfuhrer Albert Hujar, who supervised and often committed the executions himself. As it so happens, the pronunciation of Hujar's surname is similar to a vulgar Polish expression for a penis (the translator's note)

the valley, a mass grave is located with individual graves of the former prisoners and an alley lined with symbolic sarcophagi dedicated to the particular nations represented by the victims of the KL Flossenbürg.

Early monuments also referred to the traditional monumental formulas that have perpetuated the image of a monument since the ancient times. At the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, the characteristic monumental forms were pylons and obelisks (Marcuse 2010a: 66). Both these forms refer to the classic commemorative language, in which a column acts as a vertical element that metaphorically connects the earthly realm with the celestial spheres, whereas an obelisk is a sign of resurrection, after which the soul of a deceased person ascends Heaven (Chenel and Simarro 2008).

One of the first monuments referring in their formulas to the classical tradition was erected in the area of KL Buchenwald. On 19th April 1945, during a roll call dedicated to the funeral ceremony, a monument built by the survivors was unveiled. It was a wooden obelisk with an acronym of the camp name (K.L.B.) and 51 000 number to indicate the estimated number of victims. The monument, however, was of temporary nature and it was removed from the site under the administration of the Soviet units staying in this area.

In April 1946, in the former KL Bergen-Belsen situated in the British occupation zone at that time, the Central Jewish Committee for the British Zone of Germany, which had been established in the DP camp, decided to build a monument commemorating their relatives murdered in the camp. It is a rare example of monuments erected during the first years after the war to directly honour the memory of victims of the Jewish origin. It takes a form of a 2-meter tall cuboid topped with a sphere. Its walls are covered with inscriptions in English and in Hebrew and also with symbols relating to the Jewish sepulchral tradition: the Star of David and a bas-relief depicting broken trees. A year later, the British administration of the occupation zone in Germany decided to set up a 20-meter obelisk against the background of a 40-meter commemoration wall with inscriptions in 14 languages representing former prisoners' nationalities (Marcuse 2010b: 194). In 1952, the monument became a central point of a cemetery and a park that were established at the site a few years later. With their infrastructure demolished, the post-camp areas were transformed into a park, in accordance with the recommendations of the British administration, who seemed to believe that the painful memories associated with that place should not be flaunted too much. Some scholars interpret this fact as the first political action undertaken by the Allied to work out an alliance against the Soviet Union in a newly formed German state, in the face of a growing Cold War conflict (Schulze 2008: 12).

Commemorative activities were undertaken early also at the site of the former KL Mauthausen located in Austria. Liberated on 5th May 1945 by Americans, the camp was passed under the Soviet administration two months later, as a result of establishing the occupation zones. Until May 1946, Soviet troops were based in the former camp. While leaving the area in June 1947, the Soviets obligated the Austrian government to arrange a „dignified" commemoration site in the post-camp area (Marcuse 2010c: 194; Perz 2016: 38). The first central form of commemorating all the victims of the KL Mauthausen was set up in 1949 on a former roll call square. It was a stone sarcophagus with a Latin sentence *Mortuorum sorte discant viventes* (The Living Learn from the Fate of the Deceased) engraved on it. The simple stone block might have been inspired by the Stones of Remembrance by a British architect, Edwin Lutyens. The stones were characteristic elements in the landscape of the cemeteries set at the sites of the battles fought during the First World War. Set up in the post-camp area, the monument initiated the process of developing a formula for a remembrance park located between the main camp and the quarry. The process of the spatial organisation of that place was then begun and it has been continued until the present day. So far, various communities have been able to fund individual forms of commemorating the victims. New monuments still keep appearing on the gentle slope to honour the memory of the citizens of various European countries who died at the KL Mauthausen.

Characteristic for the early development of the post-camp space, the process of securing the evidence of the crimes committed there became particularly important. The first stage of commemoration also included information boards provided to mark the most important places related to the atrocities that had taken place in the concentration camps. They were put up next to the ruins of gas chambers, crematories and execution sites. In 1947 the survivors of the KL Flossenbürg put a list of the victims, including their nationalities, on the former crematorium chimney (Marcuse 2010c). With a growing tendency to demolish post-camp architecture, some objects considered to be the symbols of camp terror were preserved: the main gates, watchtowers, fences and some functional barracks.

3.3.9 First Museum Units Established in the Post-camp Architectural Objects

Collected after the war to testify about the crimes committed in concentration camps, artefacts and objects related to prisoners' existence were gathered at museums established at the sites of the former camps. In November 1944, by a decree of the *Polish Committee of the National Liberation* (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*) a museum unit was established at the site of the former KL Lublin

(Majdanek) – the first institution of this type in the world. Three years later, the museum was officially sanctioned by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland as the *State Museum at Majdanek* (*Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku*). Thanks to the commitment of the former prisoners, the first historical exhibition was opened in one of the renovated prisoner barracks in September 1945, five months after the liberation. Photographs, drawings presenting the existence in the camp, empty Zyklon B canisters and prison clothes were put on display. The sublimed character of the event was emphasized by an urn filled with the camp victims' ashes set in the centre. The exhibition was also supposed to exert some propaganda impact in relation to the policy pursued by the Polish government. The information provided with the exhibition considerably exaggerated the numbers of camp victims. In accordance with the recommendations of the *Polish-Soviet Committee for Investigation of German Crimes at Majdanek* (*Polsko-Sowieckiej Komisji do Zbadania Zbrodni Niemieckich Popełnionych na Majdanku*), it was stated that 2 million prisoners lost their lives there, whereas some contemporary studies indicate that the actual number of victims was approximately 75 000. Universalising all the prisoners and omitting the role of the camp in the mass extermination of Jewish people came as additional propaganda elements added to the exhibition. The victims of Jewish origin and of other nationalities were shifted to the background of the prevailing Polish martyrdom. A year later, however, a display was arranged in the national pavilions with an exhibition dedicated to Jewish victims, under the care of the *Central Committee of Polish Jews* (*Centralny Komitet Żydów Polskich*) (Banach 2014: 278–280).

On 2nd July 1947, the infrastructure of the former KL Lublin was covered by legal protection, under the *Act on Commemorating the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and other Nations at Majdanek* (*Journal of Laws 1947, no. 52, item 266*). Its first paragraph states the following: T*he site of the former Nazi concentration camp at Majdanek, with all the buildings and facilities, shall be preserved forever as the Memorial to the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and Other Nations.* The historical layout of the camp covered the area of approximately 270 ha. In September 1949, by the Ordinance of the Minister of Culture and Art on establishing the boundaries of the *Memorial to the Martyrdom at Majdanek* (*Pomnik Męczeństwa na Majdanku*), over 96 ha were dedicated to the commemorative purposes. The most important historical objects were preserved. Today, the area of the State Museum at Majdanek covers almost 90 ha (Szychowski 2011: 301).

Also on 2nd July 1947, by the *Act on Commemorating the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and other Nations at Oświęcim*, a museum was officially established at the site of the former KL Auschwitz and its historical infrastructure was provided with legal protection. The area covers 191 ha (Auschwitz I – 20 ha, Auschwitz II Birkenau 171 ha). The securing of the area covered mainly the site of the primary camp in Oświęcim. The former KL Birkenau had to wait for its commemoration formula a few years longer. It was generally treated as a proof of the committed crimes. Despite numerous designs that were proposed during the years 1945 – 1952, the final one was selected in 1955. It was an urn filled with the soil collected at various concentration and extermination camps (Rawecka and Rawecki 1997: 18). A more sublime formula was developed a decade later. The commemoration process was started in 1957, when a competition was announced for a design of the *International Monument to the Victims of Fascism* at the site of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Some museum exhibitions organised during the first five years after the war were of an unofficial character. They were arranged upon the initiative of former prisoners, who were fighting in that way to save the proofs of the past. One of such exhibitions was organised at the former KL Dachau, in the building of the former crematorium situated in the complex, however, outside the layout of the main camp. The exhibition displayed the collected proofs of the committed crimes and photographs documenting the atrocities discovered after the liberation of the camp. In 1948 the access to the exhibition became more and more difficult, because a DP camp was organised at that site. In May 1953 the Bavarian government decided to remove the exhibition and to close the crematorium building to the public. It was made accessible again a year later, after numerous protests expressed by international communities (Marcuse 2005: 122–123).

Museum exhibitions organised during the first post-war years at the sites of the former KL units were usually located in the surviving post-camp buildings, such as prisoner barracks, warehouses or crematoria. The adaptation of the original architecture for museum purposes fostered its conservation and preservation of the historical authenticity of the post-camp sites.

3.4 The Years 1950-1989 - Commemorative Architecture as a Propaganda Instrument Serving the Policy Pursued During the Cold War

Activities undertaken in relation to the process of denazification in the Soviet occupation zone ended in 1948 and a year later the administration of the American, British and French armies was terminated in other parts of Germany. Europe gained its new political division. In 1949, two states were proclaimed in the former occupation zones in Germany: the Federal Republic of Germany with its capital in Bonn and the Ger-

man Democratic Republic with its capital in the eastern part of Berlin.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the tension in diplomatic relations among the former anti-Nazi coalition member states began to grow stronger. Two poles at the opposite sides of the global politics were now taken by two groups: the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, with all the countries it affected in ideological, economic and military aspects (among others, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia) and the NATO countries, with other western countries (among others, the United States of America, Great Britain, France, Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany). The atmosphere of mutual hostility strongly affected the cultural landscape of Europe. As Tony Judt (1992), a historian, states, until 1989 the geopolitics of post-war Europe was determined by two issues: the division of the countries established in Yalta and frozen during the Cold War, and a common wish to forget about the recent past and to shape a new continent. The western countries became oriented toward a transnational union related to the reconstruction and modernisaton of western European economy, whereas in the eastern countries an analogical union, also oriented toward productivity, was imposed in the name of the common interest in the socialist revolution. From the role of a defeated tyrant, two German states quickly shifted to the role of the ally countries to the opposite sides of the Cold War conflict.

Depending on the course of the Cold War, the cultural and political contexts directly affected the ways of commemorating the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps. The memory about victims of the Nazi regime was instrumentalised to a very large extent. It became one of the main elements that contributed to mutual antagonisms. The attitude to the Nazi crimes took various forms, starting from their concealment and whitewashing and ending with their accentuation and creation of various myths around them. The former system of concentration camps was now spread in the territories of several European countries: the Federal Republic of Germany (including Bergen-Belsen, Neuengamme, Flossenbürg, Dachau, Hinzert, Wewelsburg aka Niederhagen), the German Democratic Republic (Buchenwald, Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen and Mittelbau-Dora), Austria (Mauthausen-Gusen), Poland (Auschwitz, Lublin aka Majdanek, Gross-Rosen, Stutthof, Plaszow, Warschau and mass extermination camps: Treblinka, Sobibor, Chełmno and Belzec), the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Kauen, Riga-Kaiserwald, Vaivara), France (Natzweiler-Struthof) and the Netherlands (the KL Herzogenbusch aka Vught). Cooperating with the former system of terror, temporary camps and forced labour camps were now also located in various countries, including Italy, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

At that time, the presence of the history of concentration camps in the mainstream of collective memory was functioning in a variety of ways. Presenting the hecatomb of the Second World War became a political instrument for the countries that were being rebuilt from ruins and also a method to cope with the social trauma. Aleida Assmann (2009: 166–167) indicates two directions that may develop at the opposite sides of any armed conflict for collective memory to follow. In a community that is an injured party, the memory of victims is developed – usually underlain with the sense of loss and, simultaneously, with strong motivation for regeneration. In a community of an aggressor, the attitude toward the past is developed as the memory of perpetrators. Triggered by social mechanisms of defense against memories, the memory of perpetrators may lead to the concealment of history. The tendencies indicated by the scholar can be also observed in the process of developing the architecture of the post-camp sites.

As a point where public art and political memory intersect, monuments have always reflected aesthetic and political revolutions (Ziębińska-Witek 2006: 368). The following chapter presents the stages of transformation observed in the post-camp architecture against the background of the historical policy pursued by the particular countries where post-camp sites were situated after the war, including France, Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

3.4.1 France - Monuments to Victims Deported to Concentration and Extermination Camps and a Tribute to Heroes of the Resistance Movement

There were several concentration camps functioning in the occupied territories adjacent to the western borders of the Third Reich. In Alsace, which was incorporated into the Nazi empire, the KL Natzweiler-Struthof was established, later situated within the post-war French borders. The history of transformations occurring at that site followed the processes related to the formulation of the historical policy of the country. While discussing the characteristics of the formulation of memory in post-war France, Robert Gildea (2002: 59) distinguishes two factors that should be considered in such an analysis. The first factor includes countless and individual experiences of people regarding the German occupation of France during the years 1940 -1945: trauma, loss, famine, persecution, treason, deportation and heroic resistance. These elements are surrounded by myths created by politicians, intellectuals and media in order to

systematise and to explain such experiences and also to overcome pain they had inflicted. Those myths come as the second factor.

Henry Rousso (1991) defines several stages in the metamorphosis of French collective memory. The first years after the war are defined as the time of *Unfinished Mourning*. The years 1954 – 1971 are referred to as *Repression*, during which some historical accounts were denied and repressed in the official mainstream of memory – especially those referring to the active participation of the Vichy administration in deportation of Jewish people to extermination camps and to the events such as Vel'd'Hiv' Roundup (an action in which the French police actively participated in mass arrests of Jews and then in the organisation of their deportation to concentration camps). The years 1971 – 1974 are defined by Rousso as the *Broken Mirror*. According to the scholar, that was the time when all the repressed historical questions suddenly reappeared. The post-war generation matured and started searching for the truth about the scale of French collaboration with the Third Reich. The next stage is *Obsession* – the time of obsessive studies on the history of the Second World War with all its consequences. This comes as a very general outline of the French historical policy against the background of which the post-war fate of the KL Natzweiler-Struthof was unfolding.

Shortly after the war, the post-camp sites were passed under the French central administration. In the years 1945-1948 the post-camp buildings served as an internment centre for German civilians and Alsatians who had been collaborating with the Germans during the occupation. The first object of the post-camp infrastructure covered by conservation protection in 1950 was the former gas chamber building, located outside the main camp. Some early ideas referring to the transformation of the post-camp area into a monumental site were objected by the local citizens, from whom the Germans confiscated 100 ha of agricultural fields and forests to establish the camp. However, the protests ceased soon, because in July 1951 some post-camp area was bought by the *Anciens Combattants* association. The entire area with the remains of the KL structure gained the status of the French memorial site (Whatmore 2011: 56).

In spring 1954, demolition of the prisoner barracks was started because of their poor technical condition resulting from the detrimental influence of the weather on their low quality constructional structure. The commencement of the demolition work was marked with a ceremony, during which one of the prisoner barracks was destroyed. At present, the original camp architecture is represented by four barracks that once formed a prison block, a kitchen, a warehouse and a crematorium furnace. In 1960 a Deportation Monument (French *Mémorial national de la déportation*), was erected at the post-camp site, designed by Bertrand Monnet and Lucien Fenaux. A vertical, over 40 meters tall monument was made of concrete and covered with light stone. Its form resembles a flame in a metaphorical reference to the burning of victims in the crematorium furnaces. On the slope next to the monument, a necropolis of the National Cemetery (French *La Nécropole Nationale*) was located, where former prisoners were buried. Through its axial composition and the rows of light crosses marking the necropolis, the layout of the monumental site visually refers to the formal design applied in the formulation of the battle field cemeteries that appeared in France after the First World War.

In the 1960s, spurred by the post-war generation's growing interest in the past and by the trials against Adolf Eichmann and other members of concentration camp garrisons carried out in Israel, the questions about the role of France in the Second World War returned once again (Jundt 1992). After the unveiling of the monument, the former camp became a symbol of the national discourse about the war. It was carried out according to Charles de Gaulle's policy oriented toward the glorification of the French nation and the emphasis on the heroism of the Resistance movement members during the German occupation (Whatmore 2011). The notion of deportation became a significant word in the historical policy of France. A lot of discussions were taking place about the details in the characteristics of victims who had been once deported to concentration camps. Supporters of Charles de Gaulle believed that the fate of people who had been persecuted by the Germans for political reasons and for their participation in the Resistance movement (French *Résistance*) came as the most important manifestation of the attitude presented during the war. French communist organisations referred to the memory of other victims of German repression, indicating them as patriots who had given their lives in the name of the national values (Lagrou 2004). Riding the wave of those discussions, a decision was made to establish a museum at the former KL Natzweiler-Struthof on 27th June 1963. The exhibition displayed artefacts found during the modernisation work in the post-camp area and objects spontaneously offered to the museum by the former prisoners. Presented without any historical explanation, the exhibition assumed the form of a tribute paid to the camp victims by the former prisoners (Whatmore 2011: 62). On 12th May 1976, at night, the building of the camp museum was burnt by a group of neo-Nazis. The fire consumed the museum and over 95% of the exhibits collected there. Four years later, the museum was rebuilt. Its collection consisted of some partially destroyed exhibits and newly added panels illustrating the history of the French Resistance movement against the Nazism in the years 1939-1945 and deportations to the KL Natzweiler. In 2005 a new museum was built with an exhibition presenting

more historical information. It was the time when France assumed an official position regarding the concealed events from the German occupation period. Ten years before, President Jaques Chirac officially expressed regret for the collaboration of the Vichy administration during the deportation of thousands of Jews to concentration camps.

3.4.2 Austria - between Destruction of Historical Post-camp Architecture and Artistic Interpretation of the Past in the Process of Developing a Formula for a Memorial Park

Austria comes as an example of a country that definitely repudiated the Nazi past of their citizens and institutions. Covering up the Nazi past was facilitated by the fact that the international public recognised the annexation of Austria by the Third Reich in 1938 as illegal and void for international diplomacy. It occurred by the provisions of the Moscow Declarations signed by the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and the Republic of China. According to Tony Judt (1992), this fact not only placed Austria on the position of the first victim country, allowing the world to forget about its voluntary Anschluss and collaboration in further war operations carried out by the Nazi regime, but it also pushed the question of non-German citizens' responsibility for the crimes committed by the Third Reich to the verge of oblivion. Another fact that facilitated the silence over any indications regarding possible connections of Austrian citizens to the ideology of the National Socialism was a declaration of amnesty in 1948. It stopped the process of denazification of Austria and allowed the country to join the Marshall Plan. These events resulted in the fact that Austria assumed a neutral standpoint in the conflict between the East and the West that had been already continued for a decade.

The place that physically testified about the former presence of the Nazi regime in the Austrian territory was the concentration camp in Mauthausen. Liberated by the Americans, then taken over by the Soviet army, the camp was finally passed under the Austrian administration in 1946. In accordance with an order given by the Red Army administration withdrawing from the post-camp infrastructure, the main area of the former camp had to be transformed into a large-scale memorial site. The order was carried out in 1949 by erecting a central monument in the form of a stone sarcophagus on the former roll call square. Today, the construction of that monument is interpreted as an act that did not directly result from the need of the Austrian society to honour the victims of the former KL, but it was rather a fulfilment of the obligation undertaken by the Austrian government upon the order of the Soviet occupation authorities (Perz 2016: 38). Imposed by the Soviets, the obligation of commemoration did not prevent demolition of the post-camp buildings. Most original architecture was removed during the first years after the establishment of the commemoration site, mainly for economic reasons related to high costs indispensable for the maintenance of the architectural traces of the past. Upon the consent of the former prisoners, the members of the Mauthausen Committee, the buildings of the main prison camp were preserved. The main aim of those activities was to expose the place related to the suffering of prisoners. At the beginning of the 1950s, in the former laundry barrack a Christian chapel was established and a secular contemplation room with an Austrian flag in the centre was arranged. It metaphorically situated Austria in a group of the countries whose citizens were the victims of the National Socialism (Perz 2016: 41–42). Harold Marcuse (2010c: 193) defines the time of developing the commemoration site at Mauthausen as a process running from the total liquidation of the past signs to the reluctant conservation of the former camp buildings. A lot of Austrian citizens preferred to remove all the physical remains of concentration camps, without saving any relics of the system of repression and crime. Nevertheless, commemorative initiatives suggested by some prisoners' associations were not hindered by the Austrian authorities. On the slope between the main gate and the historical quarry, the memorial park was systematically developed, where the particular countries were allowed to set up monuments to honour their citizens murdered at the camp. The Wiener Graben quarry stopped its commercial operation and in 1955 it became a part of the memorial site. In the 1960s, in the place of the demolished prison block a cemetery was established and in 1970, riding the wave of international interest in the history of crimes committed in concentration camps, a decision was made to open a museum branch in the former prison infirmary accommodating an exhibition on the history of the camp.

A different fate befell the buildings at the Gusen labour camp. Since 1940, Gusen and Mauthausen had formed an administrative complex that was one of the worst concentration camps. The Soviet occupation administration took over the area in 1945 and the former barracks provided accommodation for soldiers for two years. Before withdrawing from the post-camp area, the Soviets blew up the system of underground tunnels and dismantled the quarry technical equipment. The Austrian administration dedicated the reclaimed area for residential purposes. However, some former prisoners were able to save the remains of the crematorium as a remembrance site that unofficially commemorated the history of the camp and its victims for quite a long time. At the beginning of the 1960s, an Italian, Ermete Sordo, bought an area of 1750 m² located around the crematorium

of Gusen, with an intention of honouring the memory of his brother, who had died in the camp. In 1965, thanks to the funds collected by the former prisoners' associations, a monument was put up in that area. It had a form of an architectural shell protecting the remains of the crematorium (www.gusen.org/commemorating-today/the-kz-gusen-memorial/). Intended to function as a memorial chamber, the architecture of that object was designed as a concrete cube with characteristic window openings in its lower part, referring to the architecture of the stone crushing plant, where prisoners used to work and which has survived to the present day. The main body of the object is hidden in the maze of concrete walls that rise gradually from the entrance zone. The minimalist façade with the texture of its formwork imprinted in the concrete contrasts with the interior that was filled with numerous boards commemorating the victims of Gusen. The exceptional construction was designed by a renowned team of Italian architects once founded by Gian Luigi Banfi, Lodovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso, Enrico Peressutti and Ernesto Nathan Rogers. Two founders of that architectural studio had been deported to the camp in Gusen during the war - di Belgiojoso and Banfi, who died there just a few weeks before the liberation of the camp. The monumental project implementation in Gusen and other designs by the B.B.P.R. architectural studio, including the Italian exhibition in Block 21 in Auschwitz (1980) and the Museum-Monument to the Deported (Italian Museo Al Deportato) in Carpi (1973) come as important examples of modern commemorative achievements (Galliani 2014).

The Austrian Ministry of Internal Affairs started to support and supervise the memorial site in Gusen as late as in the 1990s. Until that time the original architecture of the former camp had been adapted to residential purposes. The camp gate and the entrance building (so-called Jourhaus) were modified and turned into a villa and the same happened to the production complex and two brick barrack buildings. In the new urban tissue, which does not reflect the historical camp layout whatsoever, it is possible to discern some remains of the roll call square and the location of the former entrances to the tunnels under the hills, where the underground plants had been located. There are no physical traces of the architecture of the sub-camps Gusen II and Gusen III.

The Nazi heritage of the Austrian state was recalled more distinctly in 1986, when Kurt Josef Waldheim, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, decided to run for the office of the President. It was then revealed that the politician had been a member of the Nazi SA organisation and had participated in war operations carried out by the Wehrmacht in the Balkan countries. The ultimate election of Waldheim to the President resulted in the international ostracism of Austria and its partial isolation. The situation also provided an opportunity for some research studies on the Nazi past of Austria and the participation of its citizens in the crimes committed by the Third Reich. It coincided with social and political transformations in Eastern Europe that after 1989 resulted in a revision of the historical policy pursued by most countries in the post-war world.

3.4.3 The Federal Republic of Germany - Slow Reckoning with the Nazi Heritage and Masking the Original Topography of the Former Concentration Camp Units

After the war, a number of the main units of the former Nazi concentration camp system were located within the German borders – the FRG and the GDR. Although initially the fate of those areas was decided mainly by the authorities of the occupation zones, in the subsequent stages of shaping the post-war order in Europe, the question of the post-camp infrastructure became a sensitive point in the historical policy pursued by the Germans regarding the heritage of crimes committed by the Third Reich. Shortly after the war, in the countries belonging to the anti-Nazi coalition some voices could be heard that German citizens should have been blamed collectively for the crimes committed by the Nazi regime. Based on the global discussion about the collective responsibility of the German nation, Karl Jaspers, a philosopher, presented his considerations on the question of guilt in his essay *Die Schuldfrage*, published in 1946. In reference to the need of collective responsibility, he admits that *the Germans are responsible for the war because of the regime that started the war choosing a convenient moment, when nobody else wanted it* (Jaspers 1979: 162). However, he points out that the notion of guilt is ambiguous while analysing its aspects related to a criminal offence and to political, moral and metaphysical culpability.

The day when the Third Reich signed the capitulation act is referred to as the Zero Hour (German *Stunde Null*) by some German theoreticians to emphasise the re-evaluation that occurred with the commencement of the formation of the post-war German nation. The legacy of the National Socialism was heavy deadweight in the process of forming the society. Hence, the assumption readily accepted by the ideological elites was based on cutting off the Nazi past, so that the country could enter a new historical era, based on democratic ideas and cooperation with European countries (Zaborski 2011: 62–63). It raised a lot of controversies in the international environment because - along with the new beginning that had been announced - a dissociation from the history related to the functioning of the Nazi empire and the crimes it had committed was obviously intended.

Overcoming the past (German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) is another expression commonly applied in the context of the German settlement with its Nazi legacy. This notion has been used since the end of the Second World War, both in scientific analytical studies and in political debates. It sparks off controversies because of various interpretation possibilities – it can mean both: *pushing the memory about the past away and struggling with it* (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 118–119). Carried on in this way, the dialectics resulted in the fact that in the context of the historical policy pursued by the FRG, the 1950s are now referred to as *the era of silence.* As a young country, the FRG focused on political and economic activities that would quickly lead to the improvement of its economic situation. The topic of the key aspects of the genocidal functioning of the Third Reich was avoided by political dissidents and left aside by other groups in public environment (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 278). Tony Judt (1992) accuses the German state at that time of setting itself comfortably in a zone of *collective amnesia*, just like other countries of Western Europe for the next two decades.

The political discourse, particularly its fragments related to the foreign policy, was mainly focused on the conflicts of the Cold War (Saryusz-Wolska 2009: 10). Harold Marcuse (2010c: 195) defines the commemoration process in West Germany as the mobilisation of former prisoners against difficulties posed by the authorities. Concentration camps came as a strong proof of genocidal activities undertaken by the Third Reich, therefore their physical remains were demolished or transformed. Balancing between commemorating the general picture and pushing historical details into oblivion considerably affected the post-war architecture of concentration camps. A graphic example is the post-war history of the former KL Dachau. Passed under the Bavarian administration by American soldiers in 1948, the buildings of the former camp underwent gradual transformation affected by the process of supressing information about the crimes committed there and removing their material traces. Since the very beginning of the establishment of a housing estate in that area, some associations of former prisoners were fighting to prevent the process of diminishing the sense of reality of the crimes that had been committed at that site through its estheticisation. In 1953 the Bavarian government closed the exhibition in the crematoria that had been prepared by the former prisoners. Two years later an attempt was made to demolish some buildings. It was prevented by the public who was alarmed by some groups of pilgrims coming to the post-camp site (Marcuse 2001: 3; 178–185).

The protests lodged by the associations of former prisoners were intended to stop the activities organised to remove the physical traces of the concentration camps from the public space. Years of diplomatic missions were dedicated to obtain permissions for implementing commemorative architectural designs in the post-camp areas.

In 1965, due to persistent pressure exerted on the authorities of Hamburg by *Amicale Internationale KZ Neuengamme*, a French association of former prisoners, a new monument, *Le Deporté,* designed by a sculptor Françoise Salmon, was set up at the wall of the former camp in Neuengamme. Before that time, during the 1950s, the post-camp area was transformed into a penitentiary facility, so the original infrastructure was not accessible to visitors. The new function efficiently prevented organisation of pilgrimages for former prisoners and families of the camp victims. The postulates for dedicating a part of the post-camp area for commemorative purposes were submitted to the Mayor of Hamburg, who firmly objected to those ideas and appealed for avoiding any actions that could open old wounds and evoke painful memories (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 275; Wachsmann 2016: 680).

In Flossenbürg, the survivors of the concentration camp made sure that the commemoration site was established soon after the war. Similarly to Bergen-Belsen, the fact that a DP camp that had been operating at that site for almost three years contributed to that situation. The DP camp residents made sure that a memorial composition was created behind the walls of the main camp, next to the crematorium ruins. The composition consisted of a Catholic chapel and a symbolic cemetery, referred to as the Valley of Death. In 1949, after the liquidation of the DP camp, the Bavarian authorities decided to provide legal protection to the monumental site but the buildings of the main camp, where the prison blocks used to be located, were demolished. The solid stone architecture of the SS general headquarters, accommodation and administration buildings were preserved and used later on by private companies for many years, in the same way as the quarry. In the former bathhouse and the camp kitchen an industrial plant started its operation, making the former roll call square inaccessible to any external users. Since the second half of the 1950s, the northern terraces, where the prisoner barracks had been once located, were developed into a housing estate of detached, single-family houses. The historical spatial layout of the former concentration camp was completely covered by new buildings. The situation changed after the intervention of some international combatant associations (mainly French), who demanded a decent dignified burial for those who had died along the routes of evacuation marches. Until the beginning of 1960s exhumation work was still carried out by the Bavarian authorities along the routes of so-called death marches. The exhumed bodies were buried in the mass graves in the eastern area of the former camp. In the place where a historical disinfection building had been located, a necropolis was set in a form of a garden composition with granite crosses and Jewish tombstones. During this project

implementation, a homogeneous landscape composition was created, matching the Valley of Death implemented a decade earlier. Over the years, numerous transformations resulted in a division of the former camp into three areas that performed different functions. The northern part now accommodated a housing estate; the western part was turned into an industrial area and in the eastern part a commemorative park was established. The associations of former prisoners were monitoring all the spatial changes taking place in the former camp. In 1964 they stopped a demolition of the former camp detention building, where executions had been carried out. Nevertheless, former prisoners and families of the camp victims had to wait until the mid-1990s for the establishment of a monumental site reflecting the original architecture of the KL Flossenbürg and its former urban layout.

Similar turbulences associated with the transformation of the former camp areas into commemoration sites could be also observed in the case of the former KL Dachau. International combatant associations of former prisoners had to fight for over a dozen years for bestowing a commemorative function on the post-camp site. Until 1964 the area where the former prisoner blocks had been located functioned as a residential area for relocated people. The beginning of the commemoration process at the site of the former camp was in 1960, when a Catholic chapel was constructed. The project was implemented due to the persistence of a former prisoner of the KL Dachau, Bishop Johannes Neuhäusler. Several years later, a Jewish Monument was erected in the vicinity of the chapel, along with the Evangelical Church of Reconciliation (1967).

The political background to those events was a change in the attitude of West Germany toward the past related to the crimes committed by the Third Reich. Despite a general tendency to push this topic to the margins of the public life, it became a frequent subject of public debates. The debates heated up the political scene along with media reports on trials of Nazi criminals. The first criminal proceedings conducted at court in the years 1945 -1949 in Nuremberg started the process of providing public opinion with historical data on the crimes committed by the German regime. In the years 1960-1961, a trial of Adolf Eichmann was conducted in Jerusalem. It initiated a series of criminal proceedings against members of German concentration camp garrisons. In 1963 in Frankfurt on the Main, the torturers of the KL Auschwitz were brought to court and two years later the garrison members of Bełżec, Treblinka and Sobibór were also brought to their trials. The echoes of those trials directly affected the formation of collective memory in Germany. Probably, the political games of Cold War also contributed to the beginning of the commemoration process at the former KL Dachau. While Auschwitz was perceived as a symbol of the Nazi terror from the communist perspective behind the Iron Curtain, the western countries based their image of a concentration camp on the KL Dachau.

The monumental complex of the KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau was opened in 1965. It was located within the boundaries of the historical layout of the main camp, on the ¼ of the area taken by the camp in 1945. Two barracks were reconstructed but their architecture did not fully reflect the authentic constructional structure. The reconstructed historical infrastructure also included the watchtowers, some fragments of the fence, the gas chambers and the crematoria, the administrative buildings located next to the roll call square with the detention building behind them. The foundation outlines of the demolished prisoner barracks were defined with concrete frames filled with gravel and along the main alley some poplar trees were planted in reference to the landscape from the past, when the camp had been functioning. The commemoration site established in 1965 is now often criticised for the restraint in representing the characteristics of the concentration camp. The author of numerous insightful studies on the process of transformations in the area of the former KL Dachau, Harold Marcuse (2005), points out the parallel in the design of the camp architecture during its operation and its architecture as a monumental site. Both design concepts can be summed up in a metaphor of "a clean camp". For many years, the KL Dachau had been functioning as a propaganda tool for Himmler. His visits to the camp were carefully staged to present German and foreign media with a picture of a tidy place, where prisoners underwent the process of re-education. Today, similar sterile aesthetics of the reconstructed barracks and a large-scale, flat area covered with grey gravel obliterate the picture of horrible living conditions that prisoners had to suffer. The architecture of the reconstructed camp infrastructure presents the basic topography of the former camp in a utilitarian way. It is deprived of details that could render the atmosphere of cynicism and pressure exerted by the SS garrison members on the prisoners. It refers to the inscriptions that used to be placed in all the important locations of the camp. Known from other KL units, the inscription *Arbeit macht frei* in the KL Dachau was set in the metalwork of the main entrance gate and was supplemented with a citation from Henrich Himmler's speech, which was painted on the roof of the administration building adjacent to the roll call square. Mentioning publically the educational function of the concentration camp system in his radio speech broadcast on 29th January 1939, the SS Reichsführer said: *The motto of these camps is: here is a path to freedom. Its milestones are: obedience, hard work, honesty, tidiness, cleanliness, sobriety, truthfulness, sacrifice, love of thy Fatherland* (Wachsmann 2016: 118). There

were more signs and images carrying a similar message. Next to the crematorium furnaces a picture was hung, featuring a man riding a pig and a caption: *Wash your hands before you touch corpses – anyone who does not wash themselves is a pig* (Marcuse 2006:135). Today, such elements of the camp nightmare have been long gone and there are very few references to them in historical studies.

The original urban layouts of concentration camps were masked to the largest extent at the places where decisions were made to liquidate their original architecture and to leave the remaining areas to the influence of natural environment. For instance, such processes can be observed in the area of the former KL Bergen-Belsen. The transformation of the post-camp area in a park site resulted from a suggestion once made by the administration of the British occupation zone, recommending avoidance of any dramatic aesthetic means that referred to the atrocities that occurred at that place (Schulze 2008: 12). The arrangement of the memorial park was carried out by German designers led by Wilhelm Hübotter, a landscape architect and a former NSDAP member. Inspired by the architecture of German cemeteries of the First World War, the designers suggested removing all the remaining architecture and replacing it with a new park site that would perform the role of a necropolis, without any accentuation of historical individuality. Eventually, their concept was not implemented, however, on the flat, cleared area the only distinct spatial elements are the burial mounds marking the mass graves. A considerable part of the former camp has been covered by a forest planted there. Hence, the reception of a colossal scale of the former extermination site has been largely hindered.

The concept of creating landscape parks in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps sparked off a lot of controversies, as it was often associated with transformations planned by the Nazis after the liquidation of the concentration camps. Himmler and his associates intended to let natural environment affect the post-camp areas by establishing parks or adapting them for agricultural purposes (Wiedemann 2008: 42). The criticism of creating landscape parks also stemmed from the analysis of the characteristics describing the landscape architecture preferred by the Third Reich regime. The conceptual solutions applied in the established gardens, parks and cemeteries referred to the elements well-known in the landscape of German homeland. Plantings were based on the species representing native flora and they were not planted in any regular formations (Wolschke-Bulmahn 2001: 298). After the war, similar design guidelines were applied in the places where the idea of a landscape park was combined with the function of a nameless necropolis. Such a project implementation can be found in Flossenbürg, where in the 1960s the Bavarian authorities decided to establish a cemetery in the area of the former camp for the burial of the victims' remains exhumed from the mass graves located along the routes of the death marches. In Dachau, next to the main camp area, where the crematoria once used to function and executions had been carried out, a commemorative park was established. It was designed in the Alpine cemetery style, covered with evergreen plantings. Surrounding the crematoria, the idyllic park was intended to alleviate the shock experienced during a visit to the execution site.

In West Germany, the 1960s were the time when historical exhibitions on the history of concentration camps started to appear, along with the implementation of monumental sites that today give rise to accusations of obliterating the original character of the execution places. In 1966 in Bergen-Belsen, some basic information about the functioning of the concentration camp was provided in a small building located in the vicinity of the park site (Schulze 2006: 221). The information about the historical facts was of very general nature. Referring to the example of an analysis of the exhibition in Dachau, Harold Marcuse (2005) indicates the selective character of the historical information provided there. The information about the programmes of exterminating Jewish people was still very superficial, whereas racial extermination of the Sinti and Roma communities and persecution of homosexual people were not mentioned at all.

Following the student revolt of 1968, in the FRG a new wave of discourse burst out in reference to the attitude toward the Nazi legacy in the historical policy. Born after the war, young Germans started asking their parents' generation representatives about their role in the genocidal system of the National Socialism (Saryusz-Wolska 2009: 10–11, Lehnstaedt 2015: 55). The 1968 generation changed the political climate of West Germany, contradicting the achievements of the two post-war decades and it affected the course of the historical policy pursued later on, in the united German State. The 1980s were the time of a dispute on the interpretation of history, run by various political groups. The dispute opened a new chapter in German struggle with the past (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 291–322). It also initiated an artistic discourse that considerably affected the monumental art of the 21st century. During the 1980s artists started searching for new means of artistic expression that could reflect the enormity of crimes committed by their ancestors in the most appropriate way, however, without any stylistic references to the elements of the monumental art on which the Nazi propaganda had been often based and associated with. Later on in the FGR, an artistic stream was developed, today referred to as *counter-memory*. Counter-memory and the associated notions of *counter-monument* and *counter-memorial* were disseminated by the publication of some research studies on that topic carried out by James E. Young (1993; 1994; 2000a, b). The outstanding research

scholar of the Holocaust commemorative processes defines them as the commemorative space created to undermine formal assumptions of a monument – contrary to its traditionally didactic function and in opposition to the tendency of the unequivocal presentation of history and a trend toward a majestic space that reduces the role of the recipient to the role of a passive observer (1999). He refers to a particular model of a new stream in monumental art developed by artists who create artistic interventions in the public space that are blended in or concealed from the eyes of passers-by. In his publications on artists representing the counter-memory philosophy, Young lists the following names: Horst Hoheisel, Jochen Gerz, Esther Shalev-Gerz, Renata Stih, Frieder Schnock, Jenny Holzer and Micha Ullmann.

In the areas of the former concentration camps, monuments referring directly to that particular art stream are very scarce. The most recognisable example is an installation implemented in Buchenwald by Horst Hoheisel and Andreas Knitz in 1995. It has replaced the former monument that ceased to exist several decades ago. It was set up in Buchenwald, next to the main entrance gate, by the camp survivors. Today, a plate is installed there, referred to as the Monument to the Monument (German *Denkmal an ein Denkmal*). In the central part of the stainless steel plate, the scale of which reflects the projection of the monument that used to stand there five decades earlier, an acronym is engraved. The K.L.B. letters refer to the historical inscription placed by the prisoners on the first monument in 1945. Under the acronym, the nationalities of prisoners are listed in the alphabetical order. Installed in the surface of the former roll call square, the plate is continuously heated to maintain the approximate temperature of human body, 37°C.

Despite the scarce representation of counter-memory artistic installations in the post-camp areas, the discourse has significantly affected the formula of commemorative project implementations in the urban landscape all over the world in the 21st century.

Undoubtedly, debates on some historical questions have already become a characteristic element of the public life in Germany. Scientific disputes taking place in the academic environment have often permeated to wider social groups and have been commented on in various media. One of the most important discussions about the past in the 1960s was sparked off by a study published by a historian, Fritz Fischer. The author presented his considerations on the extent of German responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War (Latkowska 2012). In the mid-1980s, West Germany resumed the subject of the attitude toward the past. The discourse was introduced by a speech given in the Bundestag in 1985 by Richard von Weizsäcker, who was the President of the FGR at that time. In his speech, the President appealed to the German society for determining their attitudes toward the heritage of the Nazi dictatorship. Indirectly, he contributed to another „quarrel of historians" (German *Historikerstreit*) that was actually triggered by an essay written by Ernest Nolte and published by *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 6th of June 1986, referring to the interpretation of the Nazi past of Germany. The theses presented in the essay were elaborated by some other scholars, who published their studies in various opinion-forming periodicals. Those considerations were opposed firmly by a philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, who on 11th July excoriated them in *Die Zeit*. After the publication of his opinion, a violent dispute broke out in media on various aspects of the Third Reich history and its influence on the image of post-war Germany. The main questions discussed during the dispute referred to the ideological and political aspects. They were focused on the interpretation of the past and the consequences that the fall of the Third Reich brought to the German nation, on the attempts made at the rehabilitation of the Wehrmacht, on the origins of the popularity of the Nazi regime in response to the Bolshevism threat and also on a juxtaposition of European Jews who had been murdered with German people who had been displaced from Central and Eastern Europe. These two latter facts were interpreted as two catastrophes that became the legacy of the Second World War (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 316–322). *Opening the way for settlement has not attenuated any standpoints - it has only radicalised the parties of the disputes* (Latkowska 2012: 7).

During the 1980s, the process of discovering problems related to the Nazi terror by local associations was started. Some grassroots activities were being undertaken to commemorate stories that had been so far concealed (Boldt et al. 1999). It occurred in the former KL Niederhagen-Wewelsburg, the history of which was brought back to the sphere of collective memory after several decades. The interest of the local community eventually led to a discussion on the appropriate commemoration of the execution site. In 1978 a monument to all the victims of totalitarianism was erected. Four years later, at the Wewelsburg castle an exhibition was organised under the title of *Wewelsburg 1933–1945. The SS Cult and Terror Site*. Some similar initiatives could be observed in reference to the history of Bergen-Belsen, where citizen movements, composed mainly of local teachers and amateur historians, demanded more in-depth research on the functioning of the former concentration camp. As a result, in 1990 a new exhibition and a documentation centre were established there (Schulze 2006: 221).

An example illustrating one of the most significant outcomes of the pressure exerted by survivor associations and local communities on the institutions managing the post-camp areas is a decision made in 1989 by the Senate of Hamburg to remove the penitentiary facilities from the area of the former KL Neuengamme. The first prison

was closed in June 2003 and three years later another penitentiary facility that had been operating there since the 1950s was liquidated. After the dismantling and demolishing work carried out in 2007, almost the entire area of the former concentration camp was dedicated to commemorative purposes. Some constructional artefacts of the post-war prison that had been functioning at that place for almost four decades were also preserved. They are now the physical signs testifying about the history of the post-war adaptation and use of the post-camp areas (www.kz-gedenkstaette-neuengamme.de/).

3.4.4 The German Democratic Republic - Highlighting the Role of Commemoration Sites Established at the Former Concentration Camps in Historical Policy Creating the Identity of a New State

The post-war division of Germany into the occupation zones and a growing political conflict between the eastern and the western blocks of the countries participating in the anti-Nazi coalition subordinated East Germany to the ideology and policy of the Soviet Union. As opposed to West Germany, where combatant associations of the western countries fought against the bureaucratic tendencies toward obliterating any physical traces of the concentration camps, in East Germany the commemoration of the former camps was claimed by the state institutions and was implemented under the main motto of the anti-fascism resistance. Anna Wolff-Powęska (2011: 225) observes that anti-fascism, as an ideology underlying the GDR foundations, became a specific platform for the settlement with the inconvenient past related to the role of the German nation in crimes committed during the Second World War.

Established in 1949, the state administration was trying to disconnect the problematic past from the official socialist ideology and to push the historical burden onto the FRG that – in terms of its foreign policy - was now behind the Iron Curtain that was being reinforced by the conflict. Facilitating the development of the foundations of the new state, the propaganda rhetoric indicated the sources of the National Socialism in the pre-war capitalism and attributed Adolf Hitler's success to the support provided by the class of financial capital owners. Citizens of the eastern parts of the Third Reich were now supposed to come from the working class and, in terms of ideology, legitimised their status of the victims of the National Socialism. Anti-Semitism was presented as an instrument of manipulation used against the German society – there was no place for the Holocaust in the official mainstream of collective memory, hence, it was generally marginalised (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 223–247; Zaborski 2011:54–57).

While creating the official mainstream of collective memory, heroism and solidarity were emphasized, especially when developed among prisoners, who had been imprisoned or sentenced to forced labour for their activities in communist parties. This strongly exaggerated theory was partially grounded in the historical context, because members of the Communist Party of Germany had constituted quite a large group of victims of the National Socialism regime. Based on that interpretation, a red triangle, which was the symbol reserved for political prisoners in the KL system, also became a symbol of the anti-fascism resistance. It appeared frequently as a detail in sculptural elements included in the monumental sites in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps. 18 red triangles were set on the top of each of three sides of a 40-meter obelisk erected as the central monument in Nationalen Mahn-und Gedenkstätte in Sachsenhausen in 1961. In Buchenwald, 28 triangles formed a centrepiece in the decoration of the Hall of Honour of the Nations established in 1964 in the building of the former prisoner canteen.

Initially, starting from 1947, the former prisoners, who were members of the Association of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime (in German: *Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes* – VVN), brought the largest contribution to the formation of the official memory policy. The members of the association came from various groups of the camp survivors. However, when the position of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (in German: *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* – SED) began to grow stronger, the representatives of other parties, along with the members of Jewish and Roma origin and the representatives of the Jehovah Witnesses, were subsequently removed from the association. The fact that the members of the communist party gradually started to dominate in the association eventually resulted in the establishment of a single-party organisation in 1953. It was referred to as the Committee of Anti-Fascist Resistance Fighters (in German: *Komitee der Antifaschistischen Widerstandskämpfer* – KdAW) (Wóycicka 2009). At various stages of their operation and under the pressure of the Soviets, both organisations implemented plans made back in the times of the Soviet occupation zone and aimed at establishing monumental sites in the areas of the former concentration camps (Marcuse 2010c: 199). Developed by various associations of former prisoners since the end of the war, during theoretical considerations on the commemoration forms, the arrangements were eventually implemented after the liquidation of the Soviet Special Camps (Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen) in 1950 and after the decision about the allocation of the areas where the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany had been once based (Ravensbrück) to commemorative purposes. One of the first temporary monuments was erected at the site of the former KL Sachsenhausen.

In spring 1954 some prisoner barracks were being demolished and the bricks were reused for the construction of a monument on the former roll call square. The brick monument was approximately 2.7 meters tall and its central block was decorated with a bas-relief depicturing a Soviet soldier carrying a prisoner in his arms. The monument was topped with a triangle and VVN letters (Marcuse 2010a: 77–78).

In winter 1951 a competition was announced for the commemoration of victims of the KL Buchenwald (more information about this competition is provided later in this chapter). The camp had some particular significance to the historical policy pursued by the GDR, because during the time when the camp had been still functioning, a large group of German communists had been imprisoned there. The commemoration process was carried out in compliance with the ideology of putting emphasis on the communists' heroic attitude and also in accordance with an ideological concept of visualising the anti-fascism resistance. In September 1958, the GDR authorities officially made the Buchenwald National Memorial Site (in German: *Nationale Mahn-und Gedenkstätte Buchenwald*) accessible to the society of East Germany. The central monument is set up outside the spatial layout of the former concentration camp. It is located on the southern slope of Ettersberg Hill, in the vicinity of the Bismarck Tower (which had been standing there since 1901 until its demolition in 1949) and natural hollows, where at the end of the camp operation its SS garrison members buried prisoners' bodies in mass graves. There is also a small cemetery established by the Allied armies after the liberation of the camp.

The large-scale monumental site is arranged as a compilation of two concepts distinguished by the competition committee: the idea of a central roll call with a group sculpture by Fritz Cremer and a spatial composition designed by the Brigade Makarenko, a collective of artists, including Ludwig Deiters, Kurt Tausendschön, Hans Grotewohl, Horst Kutzat and Hubert Matthes. The Tower of Freedom dominates over the entire site (it is built in the same place where the Bismarck Tower used to stand) and it can be observed from Weimar, which is situated down the hill. The over-scaled spatial formula emphasizes the narration imposed by the communist authorities through the use of sculptural details. Visible on various elements of the spatial composition, the bas-reliefs depict scenes from the camp life, referring to a myth of Buchenwald self-liberation and a role of the communist party activists in that process. The participation of the American Army in the liberation of prisoners from the Nazi captivity has been omitted. At the very beginning of its functioning, the monumental site on the slope of Ettersberg Hill was dedicated to the exhibition of the communist ideology. It morphed from a monument paying a tribute to pre-war Social Democracy politicians who had died in the camp to a formula of a central memorial site of the GDR, where various ceremonies used to take place, not always directly related to the history of the concentration camp. At this place, members of a socialist organisation, FDJ (in German: *Freie Deutsche Jugend*), used to take their oaths of allegiance to their socialist homeland (Sacha 2013:180).

Two kilometres away, the buildings of the former concentration camp were mostly demolished at that time. The surviving historical architecture included the brick warehouses and the facilities where the SS garrison had been based. The symbols of the concentration camp terror, namely: the main gate and the crematorium, were also saved from demolition.

Three years before the opening of the monumental site in Buchenwald, the GDR authorities made a decision to add the former concentration camps in Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück to the central commemoration procedures. The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany supervised the process of implementing the architecture of the monumental sites – starting from the general spatial concepts and ending with the sculptural details. A team of designers was appointed, including architects: Ludwig Deiters, Kurt Tausendschön, Hans Grotewohl, Horst Kutzat and landscape designers: Hugo Namslauer and Hubert Matthes. In summer 1955, the artists known as the Buchenwald Collective (in German: *Buchenwald-Kollektiv*) made a tour around several European commemoration sites (including Dachau, Flossenbürg, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Neuengamme, Bergen-Belsen) to collect photographic material that could be helpful in developing architectural and urban concepts for the remembrance sites in Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück (Marcuse 2010a: 78).

In 1959 in the former KL Ravensbrück, where mostly women had been interned, the first exhibition was created in the historical prison building. The remains of prisoners collected from various graves were laid to rest in a mass grave. In the central point of the commemoration site, on a terrace by the lake, *The Carrying One* (in German: *Tragende*), a sculpture by Will Lammert, was based on a high pedestal. In 1965, in the entrance zone another sculpture by Fritz Cremer was unveiled. It was a group of mothers carrying a stretcher with a dead child (in German: *Müttergruppe)*. The monumental site was established by Lake Schwedt, in the area covering 3 ha of the historical post-camp areas specifically allocated for this purpose. The rest of the area was used by the Soviet Army units until 1990s and they were inaccessible to the public.

The third monumental site was designed by the Buchenwald Collective and implemented in Sachsenhausen in 1961. Only 5% of approximately 389 ha of the historical area was allocated to the commemorative function. The remembrance site was established within the characteristic triangular urban layout of the main camp, where prisoner blocks had once been located (Haustein 2006: 87).

The original architectural structure of the camp was demolished to a very large extent. Most barracks and functional buildings were destroyed, along with the wall that used to divide the prison area from the crematorium and the execution site, creating a false image that the two zones had been historically functioning next to each other. Although most buildings were demolished, the urban layout was preserved. The triangle layout was exceptional in the system of Nazi concentration camps. Its main designer and architect, Bernhard Kuiper, proudly emphasized the unique character of the camp that probably made this unit *the most beautiful concentration camp in Germany* (an expression used at the museum exhibition on the history of the architecture of the KL Sachsenhausen that was accessible to the public from November 2015 to May 2016 in the building of the New Museum in Sachsenhausen). At the monumental site established in the 1960s, the historical axial composition was reinforced by a 40-meter, vertical monument, set in the centre of the layout in the form of an obelisk constructed on a triangular plan. In front of the obelisk, *the Liberation* (in German: *Befreiung*) - a sculpture by René Graetz – was situated, depicting a Soviet soldier, who shows two survivors a path to freedom with a protective gesture. The architectural setting was also provided to the former execution site – the Z Station. The ruins of the crematorium, the gas chambers and a sculpture by Waldemar Grzimek, depicting two prisoners supporting the third one, were secured with a roofing made of reinforced concrete (because of technical reasons, the roofing was dismantled in the 1980s).

Created in the areas of the former concentration camps, all the three monumental sites were under the GDR administration, hence they were constructed in the spirit of affirmation of the new socialist state. Prisoners' solidarity and heroism against fascism were celebrated, therefore - as it is possible to see today - sculptural compositions often depict groups of prisoners. In Buchenwald, the central sculpture visualises a narration about the self-liberation of the camp by a group of prisoners, members of the socialist movement. In Sachsenhausen (the sculpture by Waldemar Grzimek) and Ravensbrück (*A Group of Mothers* by Fritz Cremer) the sculptures represent support and solidarity in pain. Prisoners' martyrdom is also visualised in the formula of the Pietá (*The Carrying One* in w Ravensbrück). All the discussed means of artistic expression emphasize physical exhaustion. The tragedy is however presented as a universal value, where an individual perspective has been lost. In accordance with the aesthetics of socialist realism, monuments documented winners growing from the communist ideology. The monumentality of the spatial sites was comparable in terms of their scale to so-called monuments of gratitude to the Red Army that appeared *en-mass* in the countries dependant on the Soviet Union.

Most historical buildings were destroyed. According to Harold Marcuse (2010a: 200), the designers of the monumental sites in Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück decided to remove the original architectural structure in order to put some stronger emphasis on the victory over the Third Reich regime. In the topography of the former execution sites, the only objects left as the genuine testimonies of the past were the main camp facilities, such as the camp entrance gates, crematoria (or their ruins, as in Sachsenhausen), bath and kitchen buildings that were usually in a better technical condition. As Volkhard Knigge observes, reducing the remnants of the past allowed new meanings to appear, thanks to the new visualisations of commemoration (1996: 207 in: Marcuse 2010a: 79).

The former KL Mittelbau-Dora remained in the shadow cast by the policy of commemorating concentration camp victims that was focused entirely on the three main remembrance sites discussed previously. In 1950s, there were not any physical traces of the original camp architecture left. The buildings were gradually demolished. The access to the vast system of tunnels once accommodating the armaments plant under the nearby hills was closed shortly after the war. In the vicinity of the crematorium, a humble monument and a symbolic cemetery were established. In 1964 a memorial site was created there, with a sculpture by Jürgen von Woyski set in the central point. Two years later, the *Blood Trail Leads to Bonn* (in German: *Die Blutspur führt nach Bonn*), a permanent exhibition was opened in one of the surviving buildings. This was meant to reinforce the concept of the ideological continuity between the Nazi regime and the government of West Germany. In contrast to Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück (www.buchenwald.de/), the GDR administration never granted the status of a national monument to the former KL Mitelbau-Dora.

In fact, subordinating the formation of the official mainstream of East German citizens' collective memory to the centrally controlled historical policy did not actually result in a decreased interest in the past. For decades, the GDR authorities had been expanding the infrastructure of collective memory carriers. In the 1970s the abundancy of a network of museums and commemoration sites was proudly emphasized (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 240). In Sachsenhausen, simultaneously to the implementation of the monumental site, three museum exhibitions were created in the prison kitchen barracks, presenting the everyday life of the camp, participation of prisoners in resistance movements and liberation of the camp by the Red Army. Both historical buildings formed the wings of the central monument. In front of the entrance to the post-camp area, next to the main gate, the Museum of the International Resistance Movement (in German: *Museum des antifaschistischen Freiheitskampfes der europäischen Völker*), also

referred to as the New Museum (in German: *Neues Museum*), was opened. In a building of reinforced concrete, with a display area of 1300 m², exhibitions used to be arranged to present the fight against fascism in over a dozen European countries, including Albania, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Greece, Hungary, Austria, Norway, Spain, GDR, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, France, Italy, the USSR, Romania and Czechoslovakia (Haustein 2006). Set in the museum entrance zone, a triptych of stained-glass windows made in the socialist realism style constituted an introduction to the revolutionary interpretation of the history of the Second World War.

In the 1980s, the next stage of making historical thematic exhibitions accessible to the public began. In 1985, in Buchenwald, a museum was established in the former clothing and prison equipment warehouse. A permanent exhibition was arranged there, referring directly to the state ideology and emphasizing the role of the working class in the fight against fascism. It also accentuated the role of the Red Army in the process of liberating concentration camps and the countries of Eastern Europe from the Nazi occupation.

At that time, the attitudes developed during the public debates and in academic circles were popularised in the public. They acquired *material and institutional forms* (Saryusz-Wolska 2009:13) and provided solid foundations to the revolution in collective memory that was still to come after the unification of two German states in 1989 (Haustein 2006: 24–26).

3.4.5 The Polish People's Republic – The Long Processing of a Post-war Trauma and Creating Commemoration Architecture at the Sites of the Former Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps

Apart from Germany, post-war Poland was the only European country, where numerous Nazi concentration camps remained after the war. Also, all the areas where mass extermination centres organised by the Third Reich regime used to function were now located within the new Polish borders. Hence, the implementation of projects commemorating execution places plays a significant role in the development of Polish monumental art. Counted in millions of human lives, the death toll of the Second World War had deeply rooted the post-war trauma in the consciousness of Polish citizens. The history of concentration camps was initially presented in various contexts and the reminiscences of the nightmares from the execution sites and former prisoners' testimonies are still present in public life. Literary accounts on the time of imprisonment, artistic interpretations of individual experience and historical research have all become important factors in cultural development. The post-war trauma still seems to linger, despite the flow of time and variable trends of civilisational influence. Anda Rottenberg (2007:10), a historian, poses a thesis that the mark left by the war has become one of the most characteristic features of Polish modern art. It originates not only from enormous war loss but also from the dramatic fight for independence. Both these elements have constituted the constructive features of the Polish tradition since the 18th century.

Since the very beginning, the tragedy of Nazi concentration camps had been interpreted in the spirit of romantic pathos. Survivors were presented mainly as defenders of independence and promoters of the Catholic social order. A picture of the camp reality consistent with the facts was unacceptable for the Polish authorities, who at the end of the 1940s were operating under the offensive policy of the USSR. However, some voices of protest against such an interpretation of the past could be heard in the society. For instance, in September 1946 *Tygodnik Powszechny*, a periodical, published an opinion given by a former prisoner, Maria Jezierska: *It is common to see all prisoners as victims of political persecution, ideological martyrs. It is common to see a camp as a torture chamber for noble individuals, fighters of immaculate characters and indomitable will. What a painful misunderstanding! These were libertarian people who gave camps their sublime labels. I am sorry to say that, but such a bronze statue of misunderstanding should be overthrown. We, former prisoners, do not want any pathos in the assessment of our situation. We want the assessment of the naked truth. The camp was so morbid, because it was dishonourable and abominable, because ideological and really noble individuals were forced to live next to beings of the lesser kind, dull, thoughtless crowds - not just because it was a perfectly organised death factory (however, it can be defined in this way for some reasons) but because it was the cruellest paradox of existence* (Wóycicka 2009: 35). Despite such appeals in the mainstream of memory, prisoners of the Nazi camps were presented as fighters for the liberation of the country from the German occupation and, in the course of time, for the socialist ideals as well. The official and main reason for sending a person to a KL unit was their participation in the resistance movement and in the fight against fascism. Later on, next to the heroic interpretation, a martyrological approach appeared. Prisoners started to be presented as martyrs who had suffered and died in the name of the higher cause – such as defense of national values or the canon of Christian sacrifice. Some scholars indicate that the reasons for such a situation stem from the tradition of Polish Romanticism and the philosophy of messianism popular in the 19th century (Wóycicka 2009: 98–99).

The early 1950s were the time of the advancing Stalinism, both

in politics and in culture. Museum exhibitions avoided any indications pertaining to the martyrdom of nations other than those related to the countries of the Eastern Block. In the narration of commemoration, the concept of an internationalist approach was prevailing.

The Soviet Union was striving to restrict any possibilities of public disputes leading to the questions about the Soviet invasion of Poland on 17th September 1939 and about the fate of thousands of Polish soldiers and policemen lost during the first months of the Soviet occupation of the eastern parts of Poland. Moreover, communists were interested in flattering their allied countries by strengthening the belief that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe had been innocent victims of the German attack and they did not have any part in the crimes committed in their territories. At the same time, an image was being created that these countries were equal partners in the act of liberation through their fight under the leadership of the Red Army and participation in communist partisan organisations (Judt 1992). The legacy of horrible experience in the Nazi concentration camps was now to be used for developing new components of the national identity and for legitimising some newly introduced political discourses. The commemoration of the former execution sites became an important tool in that process, because it allowed for the visualisation of myths that were being developed and that were necessary to form new ideological foundations of the state.

The contents related to such a narration were often exhibited in museums established in the post-camp sites. The first museum in the area of the former KL Lublin (Majdanek) was established in the autumn 1944. Since the very beginning, state institutions were supervising the correctness of the data presented at the historical exhibitions, because they were significant tools for the propaganda machine by assumption. During the first exhibition at Majdanek, the nationalities of prisoners of the KL Lublin were unified and the role of the Red Army in the process of liberating the camp and the country was strongly emphasized.

In the mid-1950s, all the work on historical exhibitions was carried out under the strict supervision of the central administration. The State Museum at Majdanek assumed a formula of the *engaged martyrdom* (Banach 2014: 283). The aspect of economic profits obtained by the Third Reich regime from the slave labour in concentration camps was accentuated. It was not only criticism of fascism but also of capitalism. *At the same time, heroisation of the fight against the invaders and of the work for the reconstruction of the state was aimed at definite separation from the time of social mourning during the first post-war years* (Ibid.: 289).

The policy pursued by the Soviet Union directly affected art. Popularised in the USSR since the 1930s, socialist realism was assumed in communist Poland as the only and fundamental creative method. However, it did not have any direct influence on the commemoration of the Nazi concentration camps in the territory of Poland. This question was not in the centre of interest to communist ideologists, who were focused on the glorification of labour, working classes' life and Soviet soldiers. The Soviet military units that were based in Poland in the years 1944-1989 were always referred to in glowing terms: the liberators, the army of peace, the invincible ones, the people's army, the modern ones, the army of advancement and democracy, the army of liberation and freedom of the nations, the great fraternal Ally, etc. Until the 1980s, there were over 400 "monuments of gratitude" created in Poland (Czarnecka 2015: 76–97). Despite the multitude of monuments dedicated to honour the Red Army, not a single one of this kind was erected in the post-camp areas. Most probably, it resulted from the delayed commemoration process. The competition for the design of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism was announced in 1958, after the so-called Thaw. After Stalin's death, when the Communist Party liberalised its political course directly affecting art, socialist realism was finally abandoned as the mainstream style in architecture and other fields of visual art.

The presentation of the history of war was characterised by dynamics related to the organisational changes in state institutions that were responsible for public display of the past. It mostly referred to the first post-war decades. While in Europe the war operations were still being carried out, in Poland the first administrative units started to form. The Ministry of Culture and Art (*Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki*) was responsible for the process of commemorating victims of German crimes committed in the Polish territory. Its sub-division was the Central Directorate of Museums and Protection of Monuments (*Naczelna Dyrekcja Muzeów i Ochrony Zabytków*) that was replaced by the Central Management Board of Museums and Protection of Monuments (*Centralny Zarząd Muzeów i Ochrony Zabytków*) at the beginning of the 1950s. In spring 1945, another unit was established to supervise the further process of commemoration, namely: the Department of Museums and Monuments of Polish Martyrdom (*Wydział Muzeów i Pomników Martyrologii Polskiej*). It was mainly responsible for collecting historical materials, initiating the construction of monuments, coordinating their implementation and providing constant care to the existing architectural monuments. Two years later, the institution was renamed to the Department of Museums of Struggle and Martyrdom (*Wydział Muzeów Walki i Męczeństwa*) and in 1949, as a result of further reorganisation, it was renamed again to the Department of Museums and Monuments of Struggle against Fascism (*Wydział Muzeów i Pomników Walki z Faszyzmem*) that was resolved in 1953. At the

beginning of the next year, the quesitons related to commemoration were taken over by the departments of culture at the Provincial National Councils (*Wojewódzkie Rady Narodowe*) functioning at the Ministry of Municipal Economy (*Ministerstwo Gospodarki Komunalnej*). An advisory and consultative body in the field of physical forms of commemorating the past was the Council of Protection of Martyrdom Monuments (*Rada Ochrony Pomników Męczeństwa*), appointed in 1947. The procedures of constructing monuments and establishing museums were started upon the approval of the Department of Museums and Monuments to Polish Martyrdom. The project documents processed there were later on submitted to the Council of Protection of Martyrdom Monuments and, finally, they had to be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Art (Szychowski 2011: 300–301).

A specific term that frequently appeared in the commemoration process was *martyrdom*. As Jonathan Huener (2003) observes, next to *ordeal* and a *martyr*, martyrdom was often referred to in descriptions of the tragedy behind the concentration camp fences. These terms were put in inscriptions covering the monuments and in the terminology referring to the names of institutions that used to supervise the commemoration process, such as, for example, the Council of Protection of Martyrdom Monuments. It is quite significant that this institution, established by an act approved by the Polish Sejm in 1947, was also named by a legislative act as the Council of Protection of Martyrdom Monuments. Two years later it expanded its competences as the Council of Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Monuments. The struggle started to be mentioned in the first place, before martyrdom, in order to emphasize the higher significance of heroism over a passive attitude attributed to victims of mass extermination.

At that time, in the official discourse, Germans ceased to be enemies, as they were replaced by Hitler's supporters or fascists (Szychowski 2011: 301; Banach 2014: 281). The reason for such dialectical transformations in presenting crimes committed by the Third Reich was the establishment of the German Democratic Republic

The number of survivors had a considerable influence on the process of commemorating the Nazi concentration camps. Their post-war political and social status and participation in various organisations allowed them to promote the methods of commemoration. The post-camp areas were left under the supervision of various prisoners' associations that started to appear in Poland already in 1944. In February 1946 in Warsaw, a central unit was established to consociate survivors and victims' families: the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners of Nazi Prisons and Concentration Camp (*Polski Związek Byłych Więźniów Politycznych Hitlerowskich Więzień i Obozów Koncentracyjnych*). Three years later, according to some estimated data, it had approximately 78 000 members. Initially, activities undertaken by the association were focused on providing assistance to camp survivors and their families.

Activities oriented toward commemoration and dissemination of knowledge about Nazi crimes were developed along with the growing stabilisation of the country and, from the beginning, they were accompanied by political propagation of the socialist system (Wóycicka 2009). Over the years, the State Museum at Majdanek and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum were competing for the recognition of their remembrance sites as the central symbol of the national martyrdom. Also, the attention of the Polish Association of Former Political Prisoners of Nazi Prisons and Concentration Camp was mainly focused on both these sites. Other former Nazi concentration camps were pushed to the fringes of combatant associations' interest and for that reason their infrastructure was gradually neglected. The lack of funds for conservation work and insufficient administrative structures strongly contributed to that process (Ibid.: 238–274).

After 1960, as a result of political transformations mainly related to the so-called Thaw, there were some personnel changes in the Council of Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Monuments. The new administration initiated new activities aimed at commemorating victims of the Second World War (Banach 2014). It was the time of some intensive development observed in Polish monumental art. New innovative designs for commemoration site development were presented - often very different from the traditional monumental convention. Large-scale monumental sites combined the means of artistic expression characteristic to architecture, sculpture and other fine arts. The creative revival was especially spurred by the competition for the design of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism, as it could be discerned in the works sent to the competition in 1958. The years of disputes on the convention appropriate for commemorating the history of the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau contributed to the intensification of artistic transformations. The projects implemented during two subsequent decades exemplified innovative conceptual architectural and sculptural solutions typical of a spatio-temporal monument (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995; Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010).

In 1968, after many years of work carried out to organise the post-camp area and to secure its constructional objects, a Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom was unveiled to accentuate the commemoration site of the former KL Stutthof. The monument consists of two massive concrete blocks – a vertical one and a horizontal one. The vertical block takes the form of an enormous pillar, out of which a bas-relief emerges, depicting the figures of prisoners. The horizontal element is a 50-meter block referred to as a

reliquary, because it houses the ashes of murdered prisoners. For Wiktor Tołkin, the author of that monumental sculpture, a starting point to the entire commemoration concept was a symbolic vessel for the remains of prisoners (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010).

Wiktor Tołkin also paid special attention to the remains of the camp victims during the implementation of the monumental site at the former KL Lublin. In cooperation with Janusz Dembek, a constructor, Tołkin created a concrete container protected by a dome, supported by three enormous pillars, which was designed as the final resting place for the ashes of prisoners. This symbolic mausoleum, along with a monumental entrance gate to the post-camp areas, became an artistic embodiment of the tragic events that complements the remaining architectural artefacts. The process of creating the Memorial Monument was widely reported by the local and national press. Announced in 1967 by the Council of Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Monuments, in cooperation with the Society for the Protection of Majdanek (*Towarzystwo Opieki nad Majdankiem*) and the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (*Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków*), the competition for the monument design also sparked a lot of interest. The competition requirements were formulated in a very general way that allowed the competitors to select freely their artistic solutions (Ożóg 2014b). Made accessible to the public in 1969, the monument is one of the largest monuments in terms of volume in Poland.

Witold Cęckiewicz, the author of the Monument to the Victims of Fascism, also enjoyed some freedom in making his artistic decisions. The monument is referred to as *the Monument of Torn-Out Hearts* because of a horizontal crevice across the chests of five figures depicted in the sculpture. Cęckiewicz was asked to design the monument in 1960 by the authorities of the Association of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (*Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację*) in Kraków. The monument was unveiled in 1964 in the devastated area of the former KL Płaszów. Today, it still comes as a strong spatial accentuation in Podgórze, a district of Kraków. According to the original concept, the five figures referred to the nationalities represented by the camp victims, however, an inscription engraved on the backside of the monument - *To the memory of the martyrs murdered by the Nazi genocide perpetrators in the years 1943-1945* - displayed the universalisation of victims of the Nazi regime, typical of that time period.

In the post-camp area surrounding the monument, it is difficult to find any definition of the former urban layout of the execution site. In the years 1971-1972 trees were planted at the site, except for the area around the Monument to the Victims of Fascism and the Jewish cemetery. Any other constructional remains were overgrown with park vegetation. In the mid-1980s a rearrangement of the space was carried out to create a contemplation park. The project was however abandoned, probably because of the systemic transformations that took place in Poland during the 1990s (Kocik 2016).

Frequently, the presentation of the history of the Nazi concentration camps *in situ* in Poland assumed a formula that Harold Marcuse (2010c: 186) defines as a *retrospective perspectiv*e. It refers to education of the society through the means of the artistic message, in which heroism and suffering of the victims are emphasized and the structural elements of the camps are preserved for the future generations as the proof of the committed crimes. The communist narration introduced the rhetoric of glorifying Polish victims and avoided any direct indications of Jewish victims. Unveiled in 1967 at the site of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Monument to the Victims of Fascism in Oświęcim paid a tribute mainly to Polish martyrdom, without mentioning Jewish people, who constituted a majority among all the prisoners annihilated in the camp (Lagrou 2004). The balanced form of the monument does not interfere with the architecture preserved in the area of the enormous camp. Today, the priority to the employees taking care of the post-camp areas of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is to preserve as much architectural authenticity of the former execution site as possible.

The sites where no physical traces of the past tragedy could be visible at all were the areas of the former Nazi extermination camps. All four mass extermination camps, where Jewish people used to be murdered, were located within the post-war borders of Poland. The camp buildings and camp infrastructure had been completely destroyed by German troops months before the arrival of the Red Army. The buildings had been demolished and burnt down. The areas had been cleared in a way that would have allowed people to transform them easily into agricultural fields. In order to make the hoax even more credible, families of farmers used to be settled in the post-camp areas.

Until today, these are the sites whose history has been scarcely documented. Very little photographic documentation and files kept by the SS garrisons have survived. There have not been many accounts left by eye-witnesses either. Very few prisoners of the execution camps had been saved from a terrible fate, hence, very little information about the functioning of those sites has survived to the present day. The accounts given by the local residents were often underlain by the sense of guilt. For historians, the research studies on the history of those sites come as a challenge that requires research queries in archives in various countries (Montague 2014).

For over a decade, the necropolis of Chełmno-on-the Ner, Treblinka, Sobibór and Bełżec were not only left unprotected but also desecrated. The soil hiding thousands of victims' bodies was

dug up by local residents and those who were searching for valuables left on the dead. Over the years, grave robbers' atrocious activities contributed largely to the catastrophic condition of the post-camp areas, where human remains were often left on the ground surface (Rusiniak 2008; Kuwałek 2010; Montague 2014).

Today, the reasons for erasing traces of the Holocaust from the official discourse of commemoration are sought in the post-war hostility toward the Jews, which was manifested in pogroms or massacres (in Kielce, Kraków), anti-Semitic public events and numerous individual assaults that took place in the years 1944-1946. Later on, the situation was intensified by the Stalinisation of the social life, supporting the wave of growing anti-Semitism that was spreading all over Poland and other countries of the Eastern Block (Wóycicka 2009: 109–111).

Very few eyewitnesses survived their imprisonment in the extermination camps. Victims' relatives and closest family members, who could fight for their commemoration, had emigrated to other countries all over the world. There was not much information on where particular prisoners had died exactly. Some survivors from the Polish Jewish communities decided to commemorate their loved ones at the cemeteries, for example, in Kraków, where some monuments were erected to commemorate the death of the Holocaust victims. Inscriptions were put on the family graves, providing information about relatives who had died in the extermination camps (Kuwałek 2010: 222).

Shortly after the war, some organisations were established to consociate Jewish people. They demanded mass graves to be secured and properly honoured. However, along with the growing influence of the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza - PZPR*) on the public life in Poland, such demands did not stand the chance to achieve the intended aims.

In November 1944, the Central Committee of Polish Jews (*Centralny Komitet Żydów*) was established and a decision was made to erect a monument commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 in the area of the ghetto. The monument was created in 1946, based on a concept presented by Leon Suzin. The monument consists of two elements: a round stone tablet installed in the pavement to symbolise a hatch to the sewer system used by the Jewish insurgents and a pedestal with a commemoration plaque covered with inscriptions in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish: *To those who fell in an unprecedented and heroic fight for the dignity and freedom of the Jewish nation, for free Poland and liberation of mankind – Polish Jews*. A year later the second monument was set up on a mound that had appeared on the ruins of the demolished ghetto. In 1948 a 9-meter monument was solemnly unveiled. It is covered with expressive bas-reliefs: the *Fight* and the *Last March* by Natan Rappaport (sculpture) and Leon Suzin (architectural spatial location). Despite the Jewish origin of its author, the monument refers to the cultural archetypes of Judaism only to a limited extent. The selection of the means of expression was dominated by the aesthetics of socialist realism (Young 1994: 25).

Having merged with the Society of Jewish Culture (*Towarzystwo Kultury Żydowskiej*) in 1950, the Central Committee of Polish Jews was transformed into the Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland (*Towarzystwo Społeczno-Kulturalne Żydów w Polsce*) – an organisation that closely followed the political guidelines of the state. Its basic activities were focused on organising self-assistance in the material and organisational aspects. Historical data was collected by the Jewish Historical Institute (*Żydowski Instytut Historyczny*), established in 1947 as a result of the transformation of the Central Jewish Historical Committee (*Centralna Żydowska Komisja Historyczna*) operating at the Central Committee of Polish Jews. Those relatively autonomous institutions had some partial impact on the process of commemorating the mass graves located in the areas of Treblinka, Chełmno-on-the Ner, Bełżec and Sobibór. One of the postulates that the Central Committee of Polish Jews managed to implement, was the agreement with the administration of the State Museum in Oświęcim that the blocks no. 4 and 10 in the area of Auschwitz I would be dedicated to exhibitions related to the extermination of the Jewish nation (http://www.auschwitz.org/).

The first notes of the Nazi extermination camps appeared in Polish media in the mid-1950s, during the Thaw, which was the name for the time period when the repressive policy pursued by the authorities was alleviated after Stalin's death. The press started to publish articles about the condition of the sites where the mass extermination of Jews had once taken place. Their numbers increased along with the reports on the trials of Adolf Eichmann and other members of the extermination camp garrisons.

The work aimed at securing the locations of the extermination camps were commenced as late as the turn of the 1950s and 1960s. Simple in their forms, monuments and memorial sites constructed to protect the ashes against vandalism were established in Bełżec in 1963, in Treblinka and Chełmno-on-the Ner in 1965 and in Sobibór in 1965. The monument concepts were implemented in a very difficult political context. Although the artists had a free hand as far as artistic issues were concerned, the wording of each inscription and the use of symbols had to be approved by the authorities (Rusiniak 2008: 44). Treblinka was the only place where the direct references to the Jewish culture were applied. In the frieze of the central monument, Franciszek Duszeńko, a sculptor, put a menorah – the symbol of Judaism – the only direct reference to the nationality of the victims resting in the nearby mass graves.

In 1964 in Chełmno-on-the Ner, the tragic history of the Kumhof extermination camp was commemorated by a monumental sculp-

ture. It is a dominant element of the memorial site established in the clearing of the forest in Rzuchów, in accordance with a concept developed by Jerzy Buszkiewicz and Józef Stasiński. From the central forest clearing, where the monument is set up, several paths spread out radially, leading to the open spaces where the artefacts of the former extermination camp are located: the graves and the crematorium ruins. Inside the central object, there are rooms that initially were dedicated to historical exhibitions. It was one of the first concepts incorporating the didactic functions intended for the post-war architectural facilities in the areas of the former Nazi camps. Unfortunately, it was never implemented because of some technical issues that would not allow for the safe use of the object. The initial intention of the designers was to make a reference to a deformed Star of David in the horizontal projection of the monument (Taborska 2011: 33). The hexagram inspiration is not directly visible, however, the analysis of the spatial layout of the entire memorial site against the background of the forest allows for posing a thesis that in the landscape concept, there is a metaphorical reference to the symbol of the Jewish nation.

Commemoration projects implemented at other sites of the former mass extermination camps followed some more humble formulas. The mass graves were eventually secured and marked and sculptures were located in the central position of the memorial sites. In 1963 in Bełżec, a cube was situated in the central point of the remembrance site to become a symbolic sarcophagus for the ashes of the victims. In front of the cube, a sculpture designed by Stanisław Strzyżyński is located, depicting two physically emaciated prisoners. According to the sculptor, their mutual relationship was intended to express support in misery and solidarity in adversity (Taborska 2011: 37). In this case, the narration was similar to the one used in the reference to concentration camps, although the crimes committed at extermination camps and the fate of their prisoners were of different nature.

In 1965 a Monument to Martyrdom was unveiled in the area of the former extermination camp in Sobibór. The concepts for the spatial layout and the securing of the mass graves were developed by Romuald Dylewski. The mass graves were marked by a symbolic burial mound. Mieczysław Welter, an artist, created a sculpture of a woman cuddling a child as the central point of the site. The sculpture was put up on a brick rectangular cuboid, symbolising a gas chamber where hundreds of Jewish families found their death.

However, neither in Bełżec nor in Sobibór direct references were made to the fact that the largest group of the victims who had died at both mass extermination camps were Jewish people, brought there by the SS kommandoes from all over Europe.

After 1968, the extermination camps in Poland once again disappeared from the public historical scene as a result of the anti-Semitic policy pursued by the communist authorities (Kuwałek 2010: 518). It was as late as at the end of the 1980s when the sites of the former mass extermination camps reappeared as the subject of scientific publications, on the wave of political transformation and global interest in the Holocaust. In Bełżec a new remembrance site was established and in Sobibór a competition winner design project is being implemented at the moment. Nevertheless, global consciousness and recognisability of both these sites still seems to be lower than of Auschwitz and Dachau.

3.4.6 Czechoslovakia - Establishing Commemoration Sites Amid the State Policy, Guidelines Provided by Historians and Expectations of Former Prisoners

Despite the decades passing since the end of the war, the system of terror under which Nazi concentration camps were established has been scantily defined in social awareness, as it can be observed on the example of the history of the site in Terezin. In accordance with the classification system assumed by the Concentration Camp Inspectorate and then by the D Department (in German: Amt D) of the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office (in German: SS-WVHA), the site where members of Jewish communities and Czech citizens were exterminated had never officially functioned as a concentration camp (Hallama 2015: 66). In a comprehensive publication entitled Encyclopedia of Camps and Ghettos. 1933–1945, edited by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (2012), the site, which was referred to by the Germans as Theresienstadt, is classified as a complex, where in 1941 a ghetto was established along with the Gestapo prison for members of the Czech resistance movement and a transit camp (Blodig et al. 2012: 180). It would be difficult to look for the reasons why the Third Reich regime had never officially established any KL unit at that strategic place in the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. However, the fact that the Protectorate had once played a significant role in the Nazi propaganda might have contributed to that situation. For the public opinion, Theresienstadt was supposed to be a place for isolating elderly and sick Jews. The architectural qualities of the historical buildings in the Austrian fortress built at the turn of the 18th and the 19th centuries certainly provided an impression of substance and tidiness. Such a cynical narration was assumed in a documentary made upon Hitler's order in 1944 (after the war it was known under the title Hitler Gives a City to the Jews [in German: Der Führer schenkt den Juden eine Stadt). In fact, the ghetto of Theresienstadt and the forced labour camp in Leitmeritz (a sub-camp to the

KL Flossenbürg) with its underground plants Richard I and Richard II were the places where prisoners suffered and died in the conditions similar to those in KL units. Although the execution site had not functioned in the concentration camp system, its commemoration process followed a path similar to such processes carried out in other countries. In the Czech Republic, Theresienstadt has become the main symbol of the Nazi terror, equally to the extermination site in Lidice, where on 9th June 1942 the SS units massacred local residents. Hence, Theresienstadt is commonly included into the main units of the SS concentration camps. The post-war authorities of Czechoslovakia presented Terezin fortress as the KL Theresienstadt and it was referred to in the same way by the survivors, who perceived the terror mechanisms used in the ghetto in the same way as those used in any other KL units (Hallama 2015: 66–69). Functioning in the contemporary iconography, the characteristic Small Fortress gate with its Arbeit macht frei inscription adds to the confirmation of the fact that the place used to belong to the system of the Nazi concentration camps.

Regardless of its formal status, Theresienstadt gained legal protection quite early, as a symbol of terror inflicted by the SS administration. On 6th May 1947 (almost two years after using the buildings as temporary accommodation for relocated German people), the government of Czechoslovakia officially declared the constructional infrastructure of the Small Fortress to become a remembrance site to commemorate the suffering of the Czech nation. Starting from 1949, while the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was growing stronger, Theresienstadt, as a commemorative institution, was focused mainly on presenting the history of the Gestapo prison. It provided information on the victims of political persecutions against the opponents of the National Socialism and extermination of communist prisoners through forced labour. The annihilation of Jews who died in the ghetto or were sent to the extermination camps was never broadly mentioned. The exhibitions displayed in the museum of the Small Fortress presented the history of the site from the perspective underlain by communist postulates. In the course of time, the area of the historical ghetto was adapted for residential purposes. The authorities of Czechoslovakia rejected subsequent petitions sent by ghetto survivors, who requested establishing a museum in one of the buildings, where an exhibition on the tragic fate of the site could be presented to the public. In the 1960s, during the alleviation of political tension, the Small Fortress gained legal protection that prevented further devastation of its original architecture. A dedicated team of scientists commenced working on the new substantive content of the exhibition. This time, the history of the ghetto and the forced labour camp in Leitmeritz was exposed. The area of the cemeteries in the vicinity of the Small Fortress and by the Ohre River, where the Nazi had damped the ashes of thousands of their victims, were also redesigned. However, after a short period of liberalisation during the Prague Spring, a return to the communist ideology was observed (Blodig 1995; Hallama 2015). For many years, the impressive architecture of the Small Fortress that used to be a prison for non-Jewish Czech politicians, has been functioning as a museum and a monument to the entire complex and has never been completed with any centrepiece monument (Marcuse 2010a: 58).

3.4.7 The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - the History of Nazi Terror in the Shadow of Commemorating the Great Patriotic War

The contemporary literature on the subject discussed in this monograph provides scarce references to the commemoration of the former concentration camps in Riga-Kaiserwald (now Latvia), Kauen (now Lithuania) and Vaivara (now Estonia). Those sites, with the network of their sub-camps (including Salaspils, Klooga and Ereda) and related mass extermination places (such as the 9th Fort in Kaunas, Rumbula) constitute an important part in the history of the mass extermination of Jews carried out by the Germans in the Baltic countries. Unfortunately, it still exists only on the fringes of contemporary collective memory. Considering a global approach, even less is known about the characteristics of the monumental forms implemented at those sites. Most scholars who focus their scientific interests on monumental art usually indicate one stage of the commemoration process. It is related to the historical policy of the USSR regarding the Great Patriotic War (Young 1994). After the war, the territories of the Baltic countries were incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, where war heroes were worshipped and merits of the Red Army in the liberation of Europe from the Nazi occupation were praised. Victims of the Nazis, prisoners of concentration camps and forced labour camps were usually presented as traitors and capitulators. Strong emphasis was put on the myth of the Great Patriotic War, in which all the Soviet Union member countries fought against the fascist invaders (Wóycicka 2009:100). The myth overshadowed millions of soldiers lost, the misery of Soviet prisoners of war in concentration camps, the suffering of civilians, mass extermination of Jewish and Roma people carried out by the Germans and massacres of those communities carried out in collaboration with some local citizens. In the territories of Belarus, Lithuania and Latvia, a few humble monuments were put up at the extermination places, usually founded by Jewish families. However, they were removed in 1948, when the policy of persecuting Jewish people pursued by

Stalin became intensified. In numerous cases, spontaneously erected commemoration signs were replaced by monuments that were in compliance with the obligatory political rhetoric. After the period of de-Stalinisation, the mainstream of commemoration followed the myth of the Soviet system of the socialist revolution (Gitelman 1994). The information about the condition of the remaining constructional infrastructure of the former KL units and the commemorative formula implemented there after the declarations of independence announced by the Baltic countries is very scarce in scientific publications.

3.4.8 The International Arena - Competitions for a Design of a Monument to the Victims of Concentration Camps

The policy of commemorating concentration camps in the particular countries was pursued in accordance with the individual social and cultural factors. Regardless of the strong political influence, the question of an artistic formula applied to commemorate the camp hecatomb was an important issue in the societies all over the world. Considerations on adequate forms were presented during the disputes led by philosophers on the impossibility of conveying the war tragedy in any artistic visualisation. Three decades after the war, in 1975 Michael Wyschogrod claimed that *art diminishes the impact of suffering [...] each attempt made at transforming the Holocaust into art comes as its diminishment and as a result, it must be poor art* (in: Czapliński 2011: 781). Some artists believed that an adequate solution involves searching for some new means of artistic expression. After the trauma of the Second World War, well-taught artistic skills were apparently not enough.

A monument reflects social and historical contexts in which it has been created, including an aesthetic context related to the artistic mainstreams that have inspired creators of monumental art. A contemporary picture of monumental art has been affected by artistic values represented by cubism, expressionism, socialist realism, Earth art, minimalism and conceptual art (Young 1999). Based on that experience, numerous discussions on the status of monumental art were taking place in the international arena.

In the 1950s three competitions were announced for monuments honouring prisoners of the KL system. They were aimed at searching for innovative artistic means adequate to such a complex subject. The political situation in Europe reached some stabilisation and economic conditions improved, making the search of commemorative forms easier. It was the time to create an artistic artefact that would meet expectations in terms of its interpretation and scale. The competitions organised respectively in 1951 for the commemoration of the former KL Buchenwald, in 1953 for the commemoration of the *unknown political prisoner* and in 1957 for the commemoration of Auschwitz-Birkenau, were the first harbingers of a retreat from realistic and figurative monuments toward abstract forms (Marcuse 2010a: 73). The submitted designs, discussions and controversies during the competitions gave rise to a reflection on the monumental form commemorating the victims of the Nazi regime.

On 14th December 1951 a competition was announced for a design of a monument commemorating *the victims of the fascism terror* in Buchenwald. It was organised by the Union of Persecutees of the Nazi Regime. The competition was based on a closed formula – the invitation included only the artists who had already obtained the approval of the GDR central authorities – architects Richard Paulick and Otton Engelberger, sculptors Gustav Seitz and Fritz Cremer, a landscape architect Reinhold Lingner and an artistic team under the name of Brigade Makarenko, the members of which were Ludwig Deiters, Hans Grotewohl, Kurt Tausendschön, Hubert Matthes, Robert Riehl and Peter Götsche. Selected in that way, the artists were to guarantee that the political correctness of the implemented artistic visualisations of the commemoration site would be taken into consideration. On 28th March 1952 the results of the competition were announced: two concepts were distinguished. One was developed by Fritz Cremer and Reinhold Lingner and the other one - by Brigade Makarenko. The implementation of the project eventually combined a sculpture group designed by Cremer with an architectural composition developed by the other team of artists (Olsen 2015: 61–70).

Established in 1952 by the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps, the International Auschwitz Committee (*Comité International d`Auschwitz*) initiated the search of a formula for commemorating the site of the former KL Auschwitz. In the spring 1957, an international competition for an architectural and sculptural concept of the Monument to the Victims of Fascism in Auschwitz-Birkenau was announced. It was organised in accordance with the Competition Regulations of the International Union of Architects, in an open form, following the two-stage procedures. The main location for the monument was defined as the area among the ruins of the crematoria, at the end of the railway ramp, however, the commemoration site comprised the entire area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. The competition deadline was 15th March 1958 and by that time 426 design concepts were submitted, representing 30 countries from all over the world. The best concept was to be selected by an international jury composed of Henry Moore, August Zamoyski, Giuseppe Perugini, Jacob Bakema, Pierre Courthion, Odette Elina and Romuald Gutt. A month later, after the submission of the designs was closed, seven

of them were qualified to the next stage of the competition (including three Polish teams, three Italian teams and one German team). The authors of the distinguished concepts were then assigned with a task of modifying their designs after a visit at Oświęcim to improve them. In November three designs were selected. The shortlisted teams included the following names: Oskar Hansen, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Julian Pałka, Zofia Hansen, Edmund Kupiecki, Lechosław Rosiński, Tadeusz Plasota (Poland); Julio Lafuente, Pietro Cascella, Andrea Cascella (Italy); Maurizio Vitale, Giorgio Simoncini, Tommaso Valle, Pericle Fazzini (Italy). The international jury decided that the most interesting design was submitted by the Polish team. The authors of the winning concept designed their monument as a spatial solution of an *Open Form*, based on a design idea formulated by one of the team members, Oskar Hansen. The composition of the monument, which was defined as *the Road* monument, did not assume installing any expressive sculptures. The main element of the spatial composition was an asphalt road, running diagonally across the historical urban layout of the camp. Like lava, the asphalt was supposed to preserve camp buildings on its way and leave the remaining area to the impact of the natural environment. The concept emphasized the role of the visitor's active participation in the process of the continuous formation of the memorial site. Although the innovative concept was accepted with a lot of enthusiasm by the artistic circles, it was not approved by the former prisoners of the camp, who believed that a more traditional commemorative formula would be more dignified and more appropriate for the site. Hence, the competition organisers decided to implement a conciliatory solution and asked for an ultimate design based on the concepts presented by all the distinguished teams. The third stage of the competition was closed in May 1959 in Rome, where the jury decided on the winning design. It was a concept jointly developed by the designers of three teams, including: Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Julian Pałka from Poland (Oskar Hansen withdrew from the cooperation) and Pietro Cascella, Maurizio Vitale, Giorgio Simoncini and Tommaso Valle from Italy. The result of their cooperation was a restrained sculptural form located in the vicinity of the crematoria and a spatial concept that did not interfere with the surviving infrastructure of the post-camp buildings. Eventually, the monument commemorating the victims of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau was implemented in 1967 (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995, Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010).

Today, all three competitions are considered to have been the elements of a Cold War game. In Buchenwald, although the competition design submitted to commemorate the victims of the KL unit became a valuable project implementation in terms of its artistic qualities, it drastically changed the ideas referring to the scale of a commemorative site and strongly promoted the anti-fascist discourse in the spirit of the socialist realism ideology (Marcuse 2010c: 55). Similarly, the competitions organised in London and Oświęcim were carried out against the background of a strong conflict behind the scene, although they brought vanguard solutions to art that later on contributed to the development of new commemorative formulas.

3.5 At the Turn of the 20th and 21st Centuries - Transformation of Political Systems in Europe

The beginning of the 1990s was the time of profound social transformations. The Cold War conflict was over and political systems in Central and Eastern Europe were undergoing various changes. Transformations in the geopolitical structure of the Old Continent involved changes to many state borders. Established after the war, the multinational countries: the USSR, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia became disintegrated, whereas the FGR and the GDR became united into one state. Moreover, after 1993, the internal policy of Europe started its transformation toward a new economic and political structure – the European Union. These changes directly affected the image of the past in its global and local aspects. Tony Judt (2002) defines this time period as the *Interregnum*, a moment of confrontation with various myths developed after the war as a result of historical events related to that time period. The former interpretation of the past became either irrelevant or unacceptable in a new social situation and the new historical analysis was still to come. The historian also observes that the transformations of 1989 and the subsequent process of developing attitudes toward collective memory, which has been falsified for so many years, still come as serious challenges both in western and eastern countries. Multi-layered illusions and secrets were waiting to be dispelled and revealed in every European country (Judt 1996). At that time, new commemoration processes were affected not only by the historical policies pursued by the particular countries but also by other factors, such as activities undertaken under the international system of cooperation in the field of scientific research studies on the past, the generation change, the medialisation of the history of the Second World War and the common access to the presentation of the past events with the use of new technologies.

At that time, the visualisation of the past in the public space with the use of a wide variety of physical carriers was highly advanced. Mass celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of ending the war and public debates on that subject undoubtedly contributed to the discussed process. The generation of people born in

the time of peace matured and were now trying to understand the past and legacy they had been raised in. Creation of art dedicated to the events of the Second World War in the public space was accompanied by social disputes on the development of collective memory (Carrier 2006). Discussions were led not only on how to commemorate but also what to commemorate and in what aspects.

Aleida Assmann (2009, in: Posłuszny 2014) states that the end of the Cold War and geopolitical changes have contributed to the reconstruction of the European identity based, among others, on the common policy towards the commemoration of the Holocaust. Jay Winter (2007) also indicates several other factors that have contributed to the popularisation of the past in the modern times, namely: the development of national political imperatives, the policy of identity, globalisation of culture, a possibility of linking the memory passed on in family circles and the history passed on by institutions, sparking interest in the past events in the society through dynamically developing media (press, television, museum exhibitions, Internet) and a need of discovering the past.

Kolejny znakomity badacz zjawisk związanych z obrazowaniem przeszłości w teraźniejszości, Andreas Huyssen (2003), zwraca również uwagę na inne kulturowe zjawisko zaistniałe we współczesnym wiecie. Intensywny wpływ pojęć historycznych na codzienność zauważalny jest także w realizacjach mediów kreujących przestrzeń publiczną, m.in. architekturze, rzeźbie i innych sztukach wizualnych. Silne znaki tworzą w przestrzeni sieci znaczeń ukierunkowujące na idee związane z przeszłością.

This chapter of the monograph presents a discussion on social, cultural and political factors affecting activities that have been currently undertaken in the field of architectural transformations at the sites of the former concentration and extermination camps. During the 1990s, it was possible to draw more attention to the *proper readability of commemoration sites* (Cywiński 2016: 15). The main activities referring to the space of the former execution sites were focused mainly on legal regulations related to the methods applied to protect the physical remains of the camps. Furthermore, it was also important to determine funding sources and to formulate the priority lines to follow in the strategy referring to the institutions directly responsible for the administration of the sites of the former concentration and extermination camps. Additionally, an increase in the number of scientific publications on the history of the KL units, popularising new contexts of their operation, resulted in the fact that new meanings were presented in the post-camp space and new elements of the historical topography were accentuated. Also, the depicting of the past was observed in the post-memory characteristics (Hirsch 1997) in the time when most eyewitnesses of the past had been already gone and the facts were passed on by the historical sources and memory carriers, such as photographs and films.

3.5.1 Conflicting Remembrance - Disputes about an Artistic Form and a Formal Message of Commemoration in the Public Space

In its global aspect, contemporary memory is strongly focused on the key terms related to the experience of the society from the first half of the previous century. Despite the flow of time, the shadows of the war give the reason for the European unification and, at the same time, they constitute the everlasting source of divisions. Frequently, discovering a broader historical context related to the Second World War often triggers some social tension. According to political scientists, open disputes on the perspectives towards the past come as a manifestation of public life and pluralistic democracy. The controversies surrounding those disputes constitute various forms of organising the society and they hardly ever become rational and civilised (Leggewie and Meyer 2005: 11).

The turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries was also the time of some tension pertaining to the interpretation of historical events. It triggered debates not only on the history of the Second World War and the in-depth historical research but also provoked reflections on the questions related to the role of patriotism and religious identity in the contemporary society. Debates were often attended by representatives of academic, political and religious circles. Joanna Tokarska-Bakir (2008: 27) defines memory in the post-transformational time period *as a charge of moving trauma,* which has not been given a chance to become gradually neutralised because of political restrictions, social limitations and individual psychological blockades.

In Poland – the country was already opened to the cultural influence from the West – the name Oświęcim, the symbol of Polish martyrdom, was replaced by Auschwitz, an international synonym of the Holocaust (Zubrzycki 2009: 147). At the end of the 1990s, in the area located in the vicinity of the State Museum of Auschwitz I, some events took place that later on grew into a conflict widely commented on by Polish and international media. The situation lasted for several months. The conflict referred to one of the historical gravel pits, located outside the southern boundaries of the former *Stammlager*, near the so-called old theatre (in German: *Theatergebäude*). During the first years of the main camp operation, mining works had been carried out there by penal *kommandoes* sent by the SS garrison. The hollows left after the extraction of sand and gravel were then used as

mass execution places, where mostly Polish political prisoners and Soviet prisoners of war were shot (Cyra 2012). In 1998, upon the initiative of a former prisoner, a wooden cross was erected in the gravel pit. The cross had already been clad in an additional layer of meaning, because it commemorated the visit of Pope John Paul II at the former camp in 1979. It was an element of the altar, where the Pope celebrated the holly mass in Birkenau. The act of erecting a cross in the area of the gravel pit instantly gave rise to numerous protests of Jewish communities, for whom the space in the closest vicinity of the former camp was a sacrum zone. The dispute on the question of leaving or removing the Catholic symbol at the site was joined by the right-wing circles. The party fighting for keeping the cross at the site was led by Kazimierz Świtoń, a member of the opposition movement during the times of the Polish People's Republic, who at first organised protests and then appealed for creating a valley of crosses in the former gravel pit. As a result, in May 1999 there were over 320 crosses already set up at that place. They were founded by individual persons or religious groups from all over Poland and from abroad. Some crosses were labelled with the names of the prisoners who had died in the gravel pit, however most of them were covered with religious or national inscriptions. The crosses were also decorated with flowers and vigil candles and also with national symbols and Catholic iconography. Those actions went far beyond the process of commemorating the historical events that had taken place at the gravel pit and the visit of the Pope. After some time, visual manifestations of nationalistic and anti-Semitic attitudes appeared at the site. The place lost its commemorative significance and started to acquire characteristics of the fight for religious identity. The long-lasting dispute taking place behind the fence of the Auschwitz I was accompanied by a series of other disputes and legal disagreements that were entering the field of government debates, soon joined by the representatives of the Roman-Catholic Church. In spring 1999, the Polish government, the Church authorities and the administration of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum decided to keep the papal cross in its controversial location and to move the other crosses from the historical gravel pit to a garden at the Franciscan Monastery in Harmęże.

3.5.2 Legislation of Remembrance - Legal Definition of Geographical Boundaries of a Space Dedicated to a Commemorative Function

The above-discussed conflict initiated a legislation process leading to the updating of regulations on the protection of the former concentration and extermination camps. New regulations referred to such questions as zones adjacent directly to the protected post-camp areas, a list of administrative units responsible for all spatial changes to the newly-established protection zones. In 1996, the employees of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and the representatives of the City Hall of Oświęcim developed an Oświęcim Programme, based on which the Government's Strategic Programme for Oświęcim was approved by the Council of Ministers in October. The most important tasks implemented during the subsequent five stages of the programme included: regulation of the legal status of the grounds in the surroundings of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, development of a local plan of the protection zones around the site of the former KL Birkenau, modernisation of the urban communication tract system in Oświęcim and development of tourist infrastructure.

Soon, over 50 years after the approval of the legal system guaranteeing protection to the infrastructure of the former KL Auschwitz and the KL Lublin (Majdanek), the Polish Sejm adopted an Act on the Protection of the Sites of the Former Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camps (Journal of Laws, 1999 no. 41 item 412). The Act specifies the rules for the protection of the former execution sites in Sztutowo (the former KL Stutthof), in Rogoźnica (the former KL Gross-Rosen), in Treblinka (the former extermination camp in Treblinka), in Chełmno-on-the Ner (the former extermination camp in Kulmhof), in Sobibór (the former extermination camp in Sobibór) and in Bełżec (the former extermination camp in Bełżec). The Act regulates the rules for organising mass events at those sites, running business activities there and implementing any changes to their spatial development. In the same year an Ordinance of the Minister of Internal Affairs and Administration was issued to define the limits of the Holocaust Memorial within the boundaries of which the Martyrdom Monument in Oświęcim is located and the area and boundaries of the protection zones to that Monument (Journal of Laws 1999 no. 47 item 474).

Several years later, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage passed a number of regulations on the definition of areas dedicated to museums and monuments. The units included in the legal acts are (names approved in the regulations): the Holocaust Memorial and the Gross-Rosen Museum in Rogoźnica (Journal of Laws 2007, no. 134 item 943); the Holocaust Memorial and Museum of the Former Nazi Death Camp in Sobibór (Journal of Laws 2007, no. 134, item 944); the Memorial to the Former Extermination Camp in Bełżec (Journal of Laws 2007 no. 134, item 945); the Holocaust Memorial and the Stutthof Muzeum in Sztutowo (Journal of Laws 2007 no. 163 item 1157); the Holocaust Memorial and the Mausoleum of the Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka (Journal of Laws 2009 no. 68, item 580); the Monument to the Struggle and Martyrdom at Maj-

danek (Journal of Laws 2011, no. 171, item 1017); Museum of Martyrdom – the Former Death Camp in Chełmno-on-the Ner (Journal of Laws 2015, item 1678). These regulations specify the rules for acceptable spatial and functional development. Similar rules have been also approved for the protection zones of the Holocaust Memorials. A protection zone is understood as a strip of land, up to 100 meters wide, directly adjacent to the boundaries of the particular memorial. A special regulation issued by the Minister of the Internal Affairs and Administration also defines the method for graphical designation of the boundaries of the areas defined as the Holocaust memorials and their protection zones (Journal of Laws 1999, no. 47, item 473).

However, in Poland there are still sites of the former Nazi KL units that have not been included in any clear commemorative plans. On 27th July 2001, the Polish Sejm adopted a Resolution on the Commemoration of the Victims of the Konzentrationslager Warschau (Polish Monitor, the Official Gazette of the Government of the Republic of Poland 2001 no. 24, item 413), in which an appeal was made *to erect a monument commemorating thousands of Polish people, citizens of Warszawa, who had died in the KL Warschau under the plan of exterminating the capital of Poland, along with citizens of other nationalities, who had also been murdered at the camp: Jewish, Greek, Roma, Belarussian people and Italian officers*. Three years later, the City Council of Warszawa adopted a resolution giving a consent to construct a monument, indicating its location. At present, despite the above-mentioned legislative activities, the only official element commemorating the victims of the German Nazi KL Warschau is a remembrance plate installed in the area of the Pawiak Prison Museum in 2013.

Another site of the former concentration camp not covered by the state legal protection is the former KL Płaszów, near Kraków. The post-camp area and the ruins of the post-camp infrastructure, including the Grey House, where the detention cells had been once located, were included in the Register of Historical Monuments of the Małopolskie Province in 2002. However, the concept for the administration of the site of the former German Nazi camp is still being developed.

In 2006, the Kraków Municipality authorities announced an architectural competition for a design of spatial arrangement of the former concentration camp in Płaszów. The winning design was submitted by the Proxima studio. However, the project was not implemented, because some of its elements appeared to be controversial. Nevertheless, it became a starting point for the considerations on the transformation of the post-camp area. In November 2017, the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków organised an open air exhibition in the post-camp site entitled *The KL Płaszów*. The boards presenting historical photographs and descriptions were placed at the important points of the former camp. By 2020 a new design of spatial development is to be implemented. It consists of three elements, namely: the post-camp grounds where a visitor route is planned with information boards located at the important points of the area; the Grey House where an exhibition is planned to present the fate of the individual prisoners and the Museum with an exhibition on the history of the KL Płaszów (Kursa 2017). The intended memorial site of the former KL Płaszów is going to cover the area of approximately 40 ha and it is going to be passed under the administration of a new museum and scientific research institution.

At present, a design for a new remembrance site of the former death camp in Sobibór is also under its implementation stage. In January 2013, the State Museum at Majdanek, in cooperation with the Foundation for Polish-German Reconciliation (Fundacja Polsko-Niemieckie Pojednanie), announced a competition for the development of a new ideological artistic architectural and landscape concept for the Memorial Site in the area of the former German Nazi extermination camp in Sobibór. The aim of the competition was to create a new landscape concept for the former extermination site that would secure the mass graves and display the characteristic elements of its historical topography. It also included a design of a visitor centre building. Three main prizes were awarded. The third place was won by the concept developed by Budopol, a general construction design company, the second one was awarded to Stelmach and Partners, an architectural studio from Lublin. The winning design intended for implementation was developed by Marcin Urbanek, Piotr Michalewicz and Łukasz Mieszkowski from Warszawa. The motto for the concept was a fragment of a poem by Czesław Miłosz: *This. Which signifies knocking against a stone wall and knowing that the wall will not yield to any imploration* [2]. Hence, the main theme of the concept is a concrete wall that starts at the exhibition building, runs along the way historically leading to the gas chambers and mass graves, which it is going to encompass. The ground in the area of the mass graves and gas chambers is going to be covered with white gravel and it will be all visible through narrow slits in the wall. The route intended for visitors to the site, who will be walking toward the mass graves is not going to follow the original route which had once led prisoners to the gas chambers, because – according to the designers – *an idea of contemporary visitors following the last path of the Holocaust victims seems immoral* (in: Urbanek et al., *Projekt upamiętniania Ofiar Obozu Zagłady w Sobiborze.* Accessible at: http://www.polin.pl/template/gfx/sobibor.pdf)". The museum building forms a gate to the remembrance site and it houses a historical exhibition. From the inside of the building, the glass facades are going to open the views to the landscape of the remembrance site.

2 Translation after The New York Times, 2nd Dec. 2001(https://www.nytimes.com/2001/12/02/books/the-durable-czeslaw-milosz.html).

3.5.3 United Remembrance - Establishing Common Strategies to Create Commemoration Architecture

The reunification of the FRG and the GDR into one state significantly affected the process of spatial transformations at the sites of the former concentration camps and the development of commemorative architecture in those areas. The reunification of Germany occurred on 3rd October 1990. Until then, the political culture in the territories of both countries had been pursued in accordance with different factors and the achievement of a common standpoint required a lot of effort. A common attitude needed to be established toward the historical policy as well. The tension on the open social forum could not be avoided during that process. One of the disputes on the range of historical information that should be made accessible to the public was triggered by an exhibition entitled *War of Annihilation. Crimes of the Wehrmacht 1941-1944* (*Vernichtungskrieg. Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941 bis 1944)* displayed for the first time in Hamburg in 1995. Later on, the exhibition was presented in other German towns for four years (its alternated version was accessible to the public again in the years 2001-2004). The main accusations formed by the German public concerned presenting Wehrmacht soldiers as war criminals. Despite the controversies it was sparking, the high popularity of the exhibition and all the related social disputes confirmed that historical education in the field of the Second World War was and is still needed and in the case of the German state, it is still necessary to pursue a cohesive historical policy (Lehnstaedt 2015).

The common discourse of the historical policy pursued by the reunited Germany was formed along with legislation work. In the recommendations given in the final report on *Overcoming the Consequences of the Dictatorship of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in the Process of Reunification of Germany* (in German: *Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozeß der deutschen Einheit*) in 1998, the Committee of the German Bundestag placed a special fragment related to the particular role of the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps in the future development of collective memory in reunited Germany. For the first time ever, the German authorities emphasized the fundamental significance of memorial sites in the democratic formula of developing the remembrance culture. One of the recommendations referred to the financing of activities pertaining to commemorative processes with the use of federal funds and in some particular cases - with the use of regional and local funds as well (Boldt et al. 1999). The aims set for the further historical policy included maintaining the remembrance about victims of the dictatorship regime, securing traces of the past at the historical sites, collecting sources and carrying out scientific research in order to document the history of objects through exhibitions and involvement into education work (Schulze 2006: 222). The main tasks of the institutions responsible for the administration of the post-camp areas included preserving memory about the victims, securing historical traces at the sites of the former camps and carrying scientific research to support education centres organised at the former execution sites. Some further considerations led to a reflection that the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps should undergo a reform transforming all the museum facilities into units whose exhibition activities would be based on the current scientific research carried out at their scientific centres. According to this concept, the development of a commemorative formula should be supervised by a participatory network consisting of government administration, associations, sponsors, visitors and scientists (Schulze 2008: 14).

In July 1999, the German Parliament issued a resolution on the concept of the future federal financial support to memorial sites and a report of the Federal Government on the federal participation in memorial sites in the Federal Republic of Germany (in German: *Konzeption der künftigen Gedenkstättenförderung des Bundes und Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Beteiligung des Bundes an Gedenkstätten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Deutscher Bundestag Drucksache 14/1569 14. Wahlperiode). The resolution presented the arrangements regarding actions undertaken under the historical policy pursued toward the sites related to the history of the divided German states in the years 1949-1989 and the former Nazi concentration camps. Subsequently, a list of *The Memorial Sites of National and International Significance in Germany* was provided (in German: *Gedenkstätten von nationaler und internationaler Bedeutung in Deutschland*). It contained a review of the official remembrance sites of the national and international significance to the Federal Republic of Germany, located within its territory. Among other places, the sites of the former concentration camps in Buchenwald, Mittelbau-Dora, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Begren-Belsen, Neuengamme, Dachau and Flossenbürg were listed in that document.

The specific guidelines for the further maintenance of the historical sites of the former main concentration camps were developed in legislative forms applicable in the particular federal states. In December 2002 in Bavaria, legal regulations were developed for the protection of the former KL Dachau and Flossenbürg. In March 2003, the federal state of Thuringia provided legal regulations for the historical grounds in Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora. A year later in November, an act was passed regulating the administrative care over the remembrance sites in Lower Saxony (in German: *Gesetz*

über die Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten). The act specified the real property included in the historical areas of the Bergen-Belsen museum, methods of its administration and funding.

Developed with regard to the commemorative architecture at the sites of the former concentration camps, the programmes of spatial revitalisation followed the lines of the historical policy and respective legislation acts. In 2007, in Bergen-Belsen a new building was constructed to accommodate a museum and a documentation centre. The forest along the axis of the main road of the former camp was cleared to make the historical urban layout visible. In 2005, some revitalisation work was also commenced at the site of the former concentration camp in Neuengamme: the areas that had been functioning as the prison grounds for many years were incorporated in the post-camp site, the location of the historical buildings was symbolically defined and an exhibition and a scientific research centre were established. In the same year, during the process of commemorating the former KL Mittelbau-Dora, a new building was dedicated to accommodate historical exhibitions, an information centre for visitors, a bookshop, seminar rooms, archives and a library. In 2007 a new visitor centre was also constructed at the site of the former KL Ravensbrück (Besucherzentrum der KZ-Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück).

Combining exhibition, education and research functions, new facilities were also constructed in the post-camps areas that had been pushed to the verge of collective memony for a long time. In 2005 a Documentation and Meeting Centre was opened in the area of the former KL Hinzert (Dokumentations- und Begegnungsstätte ehemaliges KZ Hinzert). It was designed by Wandel Hoefer Lorch & Hirsch architectural studio. The building came as a complement to the development of the memorial site thus far marked by a monument erected in 1986 (by Lucien Wercollier) and a cemetery established shortly after the war.

In 2008, the line of the historical policy of the late 1990s was continued under the motto *Assuming Responsibility, Intensifying Reappraisal, Deepening Remembrance* (*Verantwortung wahrnehmen, Aufarbeitung verstärken, Gedenken vertiefen*), which was specified in a new resolution (Deutscher Bundestag Drucksache 16/9875). The document emphasized notions related to new actions undertaken at the memorial sites, such as: accentuating their national or international significance, preserving their original structure, cooperating with scientific centres in the field of disseminating the history of the Nazi terror. With regard to those guidelines, revitalisation work was commenced at numerous sites of the former concentration camps, focusing mainly on the monumental structures and museum exhibitions with the support of institutional funds. Within the framework of the spatial redesign (in German: *Neugestaltung*), some work was undertaken to accentuate the elements of the historical topography of the former KL units, new exhibition and tourist facilities were constructed, new exhibitions were organised to present new contexts of the functioning of the KL system under the National Socialism regime.

Under the new concept (in German: *Neukonzeption*) involving the spatial development of the areas of the former concentration camps, new projects were implemented at the subsequent commemorative sites. In 2009 in Dachau, a new visitor centre was opened near the historical Jourhaus gate. In the years 2013-2015 in Flossenbürg, a new concept for the architectural landscape was developed and implemented to accentuate the historical urban layout. The historical building of the former SS casino was adapted for a cafe and seminar rooms.

A new concept for presenting the past related to the history of the concentration camps was also implemented in Austria. In 2013, next to the memorial site of the former KL Mauthausen, a new information and visitor centre, a bookshop and seminar rooms were opened. Additionally, at the beginning of 2017 in Austria, a legal regulation concerning the official process of commemorating the former KL Mauthasen-Gusen entered into force (Bundesgesetz über die Errichtung der Bundesanstalt "KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen / Mauthausen Memorial"). The main aim of that document was to provide a legal definition of the characteristics pertaining to the tasks performed by the memorial site of the former KL Mauthausen, so that it could meet the requirements of a modern monument, an educational unit and a scientific centre. Some particular attention was paid to the significance of that site to the country and to the international public. The main tasks of the historical policy pursued by Austria include, first of all, preserving the remembrance of the victims of the concentration camps in Mauthausen and in Gusen and of all their satellite sub-camps, carrying out scientific research and providing documentation on the history of those sites in cooperation with other international institutions, disseminating results achieved in the field of education. Other recommended activities included preventing any forms of racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and promoting social reflection on their causes and consequences.

In 2005 in France, in the area of the former KL Natzweiler, a new building designed by Pierre-Louis Faloci was opened to the public, housing the European Centre of the Deported Resistance Members (Le Centre européen du résistant déporté) and an exhibition on the history of the European resistance against Nazism. The exhibition was developed in cooperation with scientific teams from other memorial sites of the former KL units located in Germany, Poland and Austria.

3.5.4 New Contexts of Remembrance - New Architectural Project Implementations for History Commemoration and Exhibition

The unification of the European countries under the economic and political structures of the European Union resulted in the intensified international cooperation in the field of scientific research on the past. Interdisciplinary research activities were commenced in reference to the sites related to the history of the Second World War. Carried out by the historians, the research provided new data that allowed them to analyse both totalitarian regimes of the 20th century – the Nazi dictatorship in Germany and Stalinism in the USSR – from a new perspective. The historians were also allowed to obtain some better understanding of the influence exerted by the post-war trauma and direct consequences of the German and Soviet terror regimes on the further history of Europe and of the world (Rousso, Ed. 2004). At the beginning of the new century, new scientific studies were published, presenting new contexts of the functioning of the concentration camp network. The modified and more complete knowledge affected spatial transformations of historical remains. In the topography of the former concentration camps, new emphasis was put on historical objects that were related to the facts that had not been disseminated before. New commemorative installations paid tributes to victims with the consideration of their closer identification.

After the war, at the beginning of commemoration processes, victims were presented from a universal perspective, as for example in Birkenau, where a stone triangle was depicted on the central monument to symbolise all prisoners. The explanation of such an attitude could be found in one of the guidelines for the members of the international jury to the 2nd stage of the competition announced in 1958 for a design of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism: *if the monument is to symbolise a message, the message must be typical of the entire problem. It should not be limited in artistic forms to the presentation of the fate of only one group of Auschwitz prisoners, because the regulations of the competition explicitly state that the theme of the monument is life, suffering, struggle and death of millions of victims* (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995: 100). In socialist countries, a dominating symbol used in the installations commemorating victims of the KL units was a red triangle that had been used for marking political prisoners, who had been very often connected with communist movements. The red triangle appeared as a decorative element of the monuments and historical exhibitions also in Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald.

One of the first symbolic references to the segregation used by the SS garrison members as an instrument of terror at the concentration camps was made in Dachau in 1968, in the composition of the central monument set up on the former roll call. Installed in the wall, a bas-relief depicts triangles of various colours chained together. The red triangles refer to political prisoners, the yellow triangles symbolise Jewish people and the violet ones refer to prisoners coming from communities of the Jehovah Witnesses. Still, four colours are missing among these triangles: black – used for marking so-called anti-social prisoners, green – indicating criminal prisoners, brown – assigned to Roma people and pink – worn by homosexual prisoners.

The fate of so-called *forgotten victims* became the subject of some scientific research and public debates at the end of the 1980s. Differential representations of the fate of concentration camp victims also became an element in the presentation of the history of the Nazi regime. At present, artistic installations are created in the post-camp areas to commemorate particular groups of prisoners: Jews, Roma people, homosexual prisoners and children (Niven and Paver 2010). The architectural narration has been changing its direction from the universal visualisation of the tragedy to the individualisation approached in a broader historical context.

In the recent decades, the largest ethnic group - Jewish people - who had been annihilated under the racial persecution programmes run by the Nazi Germans, has been commemorated at most sites of the former concentration camps. The commemoration has taken various forms, starting from simple monuments, through artistic installations and ending with large-scale memorial sites. Also, more attention has been paid to the individualisation of the remembrance about the victims and symbolic counteraction to the anonymity once imposed by the Nazis.

Establishing monuments dedicated to commemorate homosexual prisoners murdered in the Nazi death camps was sometimes problematic, as in the case of commemorating a group of such prisoners in Dachau (Hoffmann 1998: 81–82). In 1988, a commemorative plaque dedicated to homosexual people imprisoned by the Nazis was temporarily installed in the privacy of the underground corridors of an Evangelical church. Seven years later, the installation in the form of a triangular plaque made of pink marble was moved to a commemoration room in the museum located at the site of the former KL Dachau. Similar plaques, usually in the form of pink triangles (in German: *Rosa Winkel*), were also placed on the so-called Wailing Wall in the former KL Mauthausen (1984), at the memorial sites in Neuengamme (1985), in Sachsenhausen (1992) and in Buchenwald (2006).

The tribute paid to Roma and Sinti people at the sites of the former camps often took forms of commemorative inscriptions on stone plaques or stone blocks. These types of commemorative objects were located, among others, in the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birk-

enau (1973) in Bergen-Belsen (1982), in Mauthausen (1994), in Ravensbrück (1995), in Bełżec (2012), in Treblinka (2014) and in Chełmno-on-the Ner (2016). In 1995 in the area of the former KL Buchenwald, in the former so-called Gypsy block, a spatial installation was constructed. It was designed by Daniel Plaas. Three years later a monument (designed by Markus and Josef Pillhofer) was made accessible to the public in the memorial park in Mauthausen.

Commemorative plaques installed in the areas of the former concentration camps were dedicated also to prisoners from the Jehovah's Witnesses communities, who had been imprisoned for the refusal to participate in celebrations and organisations of the Third Reich and also for the refusal to perform military service in Werhmacht. Such plaques were located in Mauthausen (1998), Sachsenhausen (1999), Buchenwald (2002), Neuengamme (2006) and in Gusen (2014).

In the recent years, more and more attention has been also paid to the imprisonment of children in concentration camps. In 2001, a sculptural installation was created (designed by Angela Zwettler) at the memorial park in the former KL Mauthausen to commemorate the tragic fate of the youngest prisoners of the KL units.

Striving to provide the victims of the KL system with detailed identification is still continued. In Berlin some central monuments were erected, respectively: the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (in German: *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas,* designed by Peter Eisenman; 2005), the Memorial to Homosexuals Persecuted under Nazism (in German: *Denkmal für die im Nationalsozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen*, designed by Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset; 2008), the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma Victims of National Socialism (in German: *Denkmal für die im Nationalsozialismus ermordeten Sinti und Roma Europas,* designed by Dani Karavan; 2012), the Memorial to Victims of National Socialist Euthanasia Killings (in German: *Gedenk- und Informationsort für die Opfer der nationalsozialistischen „Euthanasie"- Morde*, designed by Ursula Wilms, Heinz W. Hallmann and Nikolaus Koliusis; 2014).

The controversies were raised regarding the question whether to divide prisoners as the Nazis used to do it or to present the universal character of the crimes, irrespective of their perpetrators' reasons. Activities undertaken to establish monumental sites in the post-camp areas came as an answer to the need of individual commemoration. Those remembrance places often took forms of memorial parks with various sculptural installations. A form of a lapidarium that assumed honouring various social and cultural differences was applied to create the memorial sites in Sachsenhausen and in Dachau. Multi-contextual commemoration forms, such as plaques, were installed on the inner side of the wall in Mauthausen.

After the reunification of Germany, the new political situation made it possible to introduce the question of victims oppressed by the terror of Stalinism into the discourse about the commemoration, next to the question of victims of Nazism. In the areas of Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, criminal activities had been still carried on for several years after the end of the war. The latest criticism of the two most genocidal political regimes in the history of the 20th century indicated the need for organising a historical exhibition. Hence, new museum buildings were constructed at the sites of the former concentration camps. This fact contributed to the process of modernising the spatial development of the existing memorial sites.

A lot of new historical exhibitions were organised at the site of the former concentration camp in Buchenwald. In 1995 an exhibition was opened, presenting the history of the KL Buchenwald. Two years later another exhibition was opened to the public, this time presenting the time period when the Soviet Special Camp No. 2 was operating there. A year later, an art exhibition was presented under the title *Instruments for Survival – Testimonies – Work of Art – Remembrance in a Picture*. In 1999 an exhibition was organised to present the subsequent stages of the commemoration process in Buchenwald, from the post-war period to the present (Sacha 2013: 180).

At the beginning of the 21st century, the historical topography of the former camps began to be gradually restored. Extended information on the spatial structure of the camps contributed to the exposition of some marginalised questions related to the functioning of the KL system. The process was also facilitated by excluding the unadapted parts of the post-camp areas from the functions unrelated to commemorating or securing the victims' remains. In 1991, the military units of the Group of Soviet Forces that had been based there since the end of the war started to withdraw from the eastern part of united Germany. In Ravensbrück, they finally left the post-camp areas. The rearrangement of the commemoration site of the former camp could then cover more space, along with all the related architectural artefacts.

In the late 1990s in Bergen-Belsen, some parts of the post-camp areas (mainly with the remains of the SS administration headquarters) were added to the commemoration site. Before that time, those areas had been included into the NATO military training grounds (Schulze 2006).

The areas of historical significance were also reclaimed in Neuengamme and in Vught, where some penitentiary facilities were closed after four decades of their operation at those places. The reclaimed real estate assets were transformed into memorial sites with museum exhibitions, where the history of the concentration camps was presented. In 1986 the establishment of a memorial site was commenced in the area of the former KL Herzogenbusch. The National Monument to the Camp Vught (in Dutch: *Nationaal Monument Kamp*

Vught) was opened to the public four years later, due to the process of reclaiming the areas where since the 1950s a military unit and a penitentiary facility had been based. In 2002 a visitor centre was opened there, housing exhibition and seminar rooms. At present, the building metaphorically leads visitors into the space where the historical post-camp buildings or their reconstructed copies are located: barbed wire fences, watchtowers, prisoner barracks and a crematorium.

At the beginning of the 1990s a process of restoring memory about an important aspect of the functioning of the concentration camp system – annihilation of prisoners through forced labour exercised by the SS (in German: *Vernichtung durch Arbeit*) - was commenced. Next to the concentration camps some plants were usually located, constituting an important pillar of the Third Reich economy. There used to be chemical plants, underground arms industry plants, brickyards and quarries, where prisoners were forced to work under extreme conditions, without any remuneration, any basic safety measures and under the supervision of brutal guards. Physical strain exhaustive for the human organism combined with insufficient food rations resulted in the extremely high mortality rates among prisoners.

Most forced labour camps were related to the mining industry plants, such as brickyards and quarries that later on were taken over by private companies to continue their operation. Arms industry plants were usually destroyed and their equipment was dismantled. The operation of some plants was restarted after the war, as for example, the facilities belonging to the IG Farbenindustrie Buna-Werke, a company operating next to the Auschwitz-Monowitz III camp. After the war, a Synthetic Fuel Factory in Dwory was established at that place. The prisoners murdered there are now commemorated by some simple sculptural elements. Other smaller plants were demolished without any commemoration of their history in the modern space.

In the years 1995-2001 the tunnels of the underground factory operating once at the KL Mittelbau-Dora were successively uncovered. Since the 1990s, under the implementation of a new concept for the memorial site (in German: *die Neukenzeption der KZ-Gedenkstatte Mittelbau-Dora*), a new exhibition building was constructed and tourists were allowed to visit some fragments of the former tunnels. Blown up by the Soviet Army, the entrances to the tunnels were uncovered and secured, along with some fragments of the underground tunnels to present the conditions under which prisoners had been forced to work (Wagner 2003: 25).

For many decades, spatial commemoration of forced labour sites had been very scarce. Associations of former prisoners and their families repeatedly demanded the exclusion of some areas from their current operation and their adaptation to commemorative purposes, as it was in the case of the quarries adjacent to the area of the former KL Gross-Rosen. The most infamous place related to the history of that camp had been inaccessible to the public for decades. After the war, the quarries had been taken over by the state administration and for many years they had been commercially exploited. In 2005, as a result of the activities undertaken by some former prisoners supported financially by a foreign foundation, the historical quarries were eventually included into the area of the Museum in Rogoźnica. In the future, a monumental architectural and sculptural site is planned there, based on the concept developed by the Nizio Design International. The project entitled *The Stone Hell* is now at the stage of raising funds for its implementation.

Including forced labour plants into monumental sites allows for a broader presentation of the characteristics of concentration camps. Crimes committed in those camps were set in the context of the economic system of the Third Reich. Based exclusively on the main structures of prisoner blocks, early commemoration of the camps omitted the aspect of annihilating prisoners through forced labour and therefore their reception could have been de-contextualised.

Also, some SS administrative areas have been anew exhibited as well. Based on the analysis of the preservation of the original character of the architecture of the KL Mauthausen, Bertrand Perz (2016: 47–48) points out that a media picture of the concentration camp consists of the photographs of the premises where the prisoners had been accommodated, taken during the worst period of its operation, before the liberation. However, next to the extreme living conditions in which prisoners had been forced to exist, there had been also some well-kept grounds of the SS garrison buildings, decorated with neat flower beds and recreation areas that had been maintained by prisoners. An attempt at restoring the contrasting functions of two such areas in one concentration camp was made at the former KL Stutthof in a project involving revitalisation of the greenhouses. In 2016, the museum arranged the reconstruction of the historical greenhouses from 1943. The solid, well-preserved structures had been constructed due to commandant Paul W. Hoppe's interest in gardening. Carried out quite recently, the modernisation of the greenhouses has provided an opportunity to create some exhibition space dedicated to displaying art work created by the former prisoners of the KL Stutthof during the time of its operation and later on, after its liberation.

One of the topics brought up in some recent scientific studies providing more detailed information about the functioning of the concentration camps is the history of brothels established there by their SS garrison members. Euphemistically referred to as *Sonderbaus (*special buildings*),* those objects were established in 1942 at the main KL units, under the system of bonuses suggested by Heinrich Himmler.

It is supposed that in ten main KL units (Auschwitz I, Auschwitz III – Monowitz, Mauthausen-Gusen, Flossenbürg, Buchenwald, Dachau, Neuengamme, Sachsenhausen and Mittelbau-Dora) some barracks were dedicated to sexual services provided by female prisoners of non-Jewish origin, who were forced to have sex with privileged male prisoners appointed by the SS members – mainly *kapos* and functional prisoners (Sommer 2009). It was as late as at the end of the 1990s when forced prostitution practised in the KL units was recognised as another type of crimes committed by the Nazi system and women who had been forced to do it were eventually considered to be victims. Until recently, the places where camp brothels had been once functioning were not defined at all in the topography of the concentration camps. Today, their inclusion into the commemoration sites results primarily from the extensive scientific research studies on the multi-layered functioning of the concentration camps. Nicole Bogue (2016) points out the significant influence of an exhibition entitled *Lagerbordelle. Sex Zwangsarbeit in NS-Konzentrationslagern*, presenting historical facts related to forced prostitution. Initially, the exhibition was opened to the public in 2007 in Ravensbrück and later on, in several other former concentration camps, also in Buchenwald. In the wake of that exhibition, most German museums established at the sites of the former KL units marked the places where the camp brothels had once operated. In the areas of the former KL Sachsenhausen, the KL Mittelbau-Dora, the KL Buchenwald and the KL Neuengamme the outlines of the functional barracks were clearly defined and provided with descriptions containing historical information.

3.6 Summary

Some original construction facilities of the concentration camps had already been largely devastated before the soldiers of the Allied armies entered their premises. In the east, withdrawing German units demolished construction infrastructure, as it clearly constituted a physical proof of their genocidal actions. The buildings of mass extermination camps were usually destroyed after the decision about liquidating the particular camps. Later on, during the stay of the Red Army units at the post-camp areas, the condition of the devastated historical architecture was only deteriorating. The camps located in the western parts of the Third Reich were liberated by the Allied armies, mainly by American and British soldiers. The Red Army entered the camps that had already been beyond the SS garrisons' control, whereas soldiers of the Allied armies liberating concentration camps from the western direction entered KL units that were still functioning, with their SS and Werhmacht garrisons. However, at that time, they were already in the state of organisational chaos (Bergen-Belsen – liberated on 15th April 1945 by British soldiers), with decimated military garrisons (Dachau – liberated by American soldiers on 29th April 1945) or with prisoners' rebellions going on at the premises (Buchenwald – liberated by American soldiers on 11th April 1945). After the capitulation of the Third Reich on 8th May 1945 and after the decisions made at the conference in Yalta three months before, the post-war German territory was divided into four occupational zones: British, French, American and Soviet. Some eastern parts of the pre-war German territory (including Szczecin, Wrocław and Koszalin) were at that time incorporated into the territory of Poland that remained under the influence of the USSR for the long subsequent years. In the years 1945-1949, the areas of the former concentration camps were passed under the administration of the countries responsible for the respective occupation zones in Germany and the countries where the camps remained after the anti-Nazi coalition had decided about the shape of the post-war state borders. The further fate of the original post-camp architecture was then affected by international politics.

The first decade of the post-war functioning of the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps was characterised by the highest extent of devastation affecting their original architecture. Most authentic buildings, which still rendered the horrible character of those places, were demolished or adapted to perform new functions that often resulted in their further devastation. The economic situation in post-war Europe also considerably contributed to the condition of the post-camp infrastructure. In the states liberated from the Third Reich occupation, as well as in Germany, the main effort was focused on reconstructing the ruined countries. Hence, the situation did not facilitate the endeavours made by some associations of former prisoners to preserve as much of the original post-camp infrastructure as possible. The post-camp wooden buildings were dismantled by local residents for fuel. The lack of any maintenance work during the subsequent years resulted in gradual deterioration of the post-camp architecture, which from the very beginning presented a very low level of technical sophistication. In most camps, actions of dismantling prisoner barracks and moving them to other locations were carried out upon administrative decisions. The barracks were then taken to places where people had to struggle with the lack of residential buildings and the problem had to be addressed immediately. Even at the post-camp areas where the museum units and early commemoration sites were established, most prisoner barracks were demolished – usually because of the lack of funds for current maintenance work necessary to preserve the original architecture. However, such elements as gas chambers, crematoria and entrance gates were preserved. The historical spatial

layouts of the execution sites were gradually obliterated, especially at the former KL units that were adapted by the Allied armies to perform new functions after the war. The former concentration camps were used as penitentiary facilities for people imprisoned under the process of denazification, as military barracks or as DP camps for migrating people that were later on transformed into permanent housing estates.

Some original buildings were saved from destruction due the interest in their fate and attention of social groups formed of camp survivors and families of prisoners murdered at death camps. In many cases, former prisoners' constant interest in spatial transformations taking place at the post-camp areas prevented further devastation of the historical structures. The proofs of crimes committed at death camps were secured during the ongoing struggle for the preservation of the original architecture at the execution places. Those activities were strongly supported by the museums established on the premises in order to document and to archive historical remains, under the framework of their priority tasks. Conservation and research work became intensified at that time, however with very scarce funding.

Some scientists who focus their research studies on commemorative art believe that the process of commemoration was actually commenced in the 1960s (Marcuse 2010c: 187). Nevertheless, the first forms of commemorating the tragedy behind the walls of the concentration camps appeared during the first weeks after the liberation. A lot of prisoners remembered that thinking about the ways of commemorating the victims of camp terror had given them hope that it would eventually end one day. However, immediate extermination camps still stayed at the verge of oblivion – places where the Nazis exterminated Jewish people on the massive scale. The unsecured areas covering mass graves, where hundreds of thousands of people had been buried, were exposed to desecration for over a dozen years since the end of the war.

At the beginning of the 1950s, the remains of the Nazi concentration camps were passed under the administration of various countries. Gradual stabilisation made it easier to abandon the pragmatic use of the camps, such as refugee centers or prisons for the accused ones who went to face trials carried out at military tribunals, and to approach the question of the proper commemoration of victims of the KL system. Since the beginning, the process of disseminating the history of terror exercised by the Third Reich regime was strongly affected by the policies pursued by the particular countries. The methods of presenting the history of the concentration camps, the fate and the nationality of prisoners were frequently used as an excuse for sanctioning the authority and for developing the identity of the newly established states. Myths were used for legitimisation of the new post-war shape of Europe. In particular, it referred to the nationalistic movements that often presented their versions of historical events which were developed for propaganda purposes. They structured the stories of the past in such a way that the past could function in the contemporary social context (Winter 2007). Irrespective of the political situation of the particular states, the memory about the victims of crimes committed in KL units was created through the prism of heroisation of prisoners who had participated in the tragedy. The characteristic feature of shaping the picture of the Second World War was the accentuation of the role played by members of various resistance movements. The myth of resistance was shaped freely not only in the states that had been under the German occupation during the war, but also in the GDR, which tried to cut off from its past related to the Third Reich regime by identifying itself with the anti-fascism resistance. The processes pertaining to the medialisation of the resistance against the occupants through books, films and stories about heroic attitudes and behaviour, started to appear in places where no historical documents could actually prove them, for example in Italy or the Netherlands (Jundt 1992).

The growing tension between the eastern and the western European countries undoubtedly affected the attempts made by representatives of artistic circles to create symbolic monuments. The history and the results of the three international architectural competitions announced in Buchenwald, London and Oświęcim proved that despite apparent freedom in the search of artistic creation, some political games were still carried out behind the curtains, focusing with the rest of the world on the Cold War struggle.

The Cold War rivalry observed between communists and anti-communists also affected the process of developing memorial sites in the post-camp areas and influenced the lines of artistic and formal creation during the process of commemoration. While analysing the legacy of the Nazi occupation and development of patriotic memory in Western Europe, Pieter Lagrou (2004: 275) suggests that an intentional creation of a counterweight to the monumental sites honouring the socialism ideology in Buchenwald and in Dachau presented in a form of three temples (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish chapels) comes as an example of introducing the historical policy into monumental art.

Generally, the common elements in the historical policy pursued on the both sides of the Iron Curtain were: the emphasis put on the resistance movements against the Third Reich regime (also in the GDR and the FRG) in the official discourse, the fight against the German occupants, national martyrdom and avoidance, omission or concealment of racial mass exterminations carried out by the Nazis. In most countries, the common public opinion was that monuments should visualise the victory over the National Socialism regime. Presenting an individual tragedy, which would lead to the interpretation

of the experience of the humanity as failure, was generally against the mainstream. The history of the concentration camps was presented from the perspective of the suffering of the entire nations and it did not refer to the specificity of the programmed extermination of the selected social groups carried out by the Nazis. Individual tragedies were seldom referred to in the monumental art of that period. Plaques commemorating individuals were primarily used for political purposes. For instance, in Buchenwald, two remembrance sites were establish to honour the death of Ernst Thälmann and Rudolf Breitscheid, two politicians who represented the pre-war German social democratic parties and who had been murdered at that KL unit.

An important aspect of the historical policy pursued during the first post-war decades was the concealment of details related to the programmed extermination of the Jewish nation, initiated by Hitler. For a long time, the notion of the Holocaust was not present in the public discourse at all and its currently created metonymy, Auschwitz, was used in a completely different semantic context (Pietrasik 2010). Despite the fact that they were dying because of their ethnic origin, Jews were included in the groups of victims defined on the basis of their nationality. Finalised with a well-planned extermination programme, euphemistically referred to as "the final solution to the Jewish question", racial persecution carried out by national socialists from the moment they seized the power in Germany was not a commonly known fact. This approach to the problem was of universal nature and it was observed in most countries. Today, contemporary scholars often formulate a thesis that the racial extermination of the Jewish nation was particularly commemorated neither in Europe nor in the United States of America until the 1960s. In the USSR the question was considered a social taboo even for longer (Marcuse 2001; Lagrou 2004). This specific form of collective amnesia could be also observed in Israel, which – as a young state – was developing its identity mainly on emphasizing the heroic attitude of Jewish people against Nazi persecutors. The question of mass extermination was treated with a lot of reluctance because of the references to the passiveness of victims. Despite the fact that Kneset (the Israeli Parliament) decided to establish the Holocaust and Ghetto Uprising Commemoration Day and the Yad Vashem Institute (1953), the Shoah remained in the sphere of individual commemoration among the survivors until the 1960s. It was Adolf Eichmann's trial – widely publicised and broadcast by media – and the scientific research commenced in its wake that contributed to the common public awareness of the history of the Holocaust and its commemoration (Wóycicka 2009).

The implementation of the state policy and the accentuation of ideological elements in the visualisation of the past resulted in the fact that concentration camps were commemorated in a very individual way. Metaphorically, their functioning as spaces isolated from the outside world still continued. Developing a formula for spatial commemoration of the concentration camp system deprived of its semantic context contributed to the rise of the cultural icons of Auschwitz, Dachau and Buchenwald.

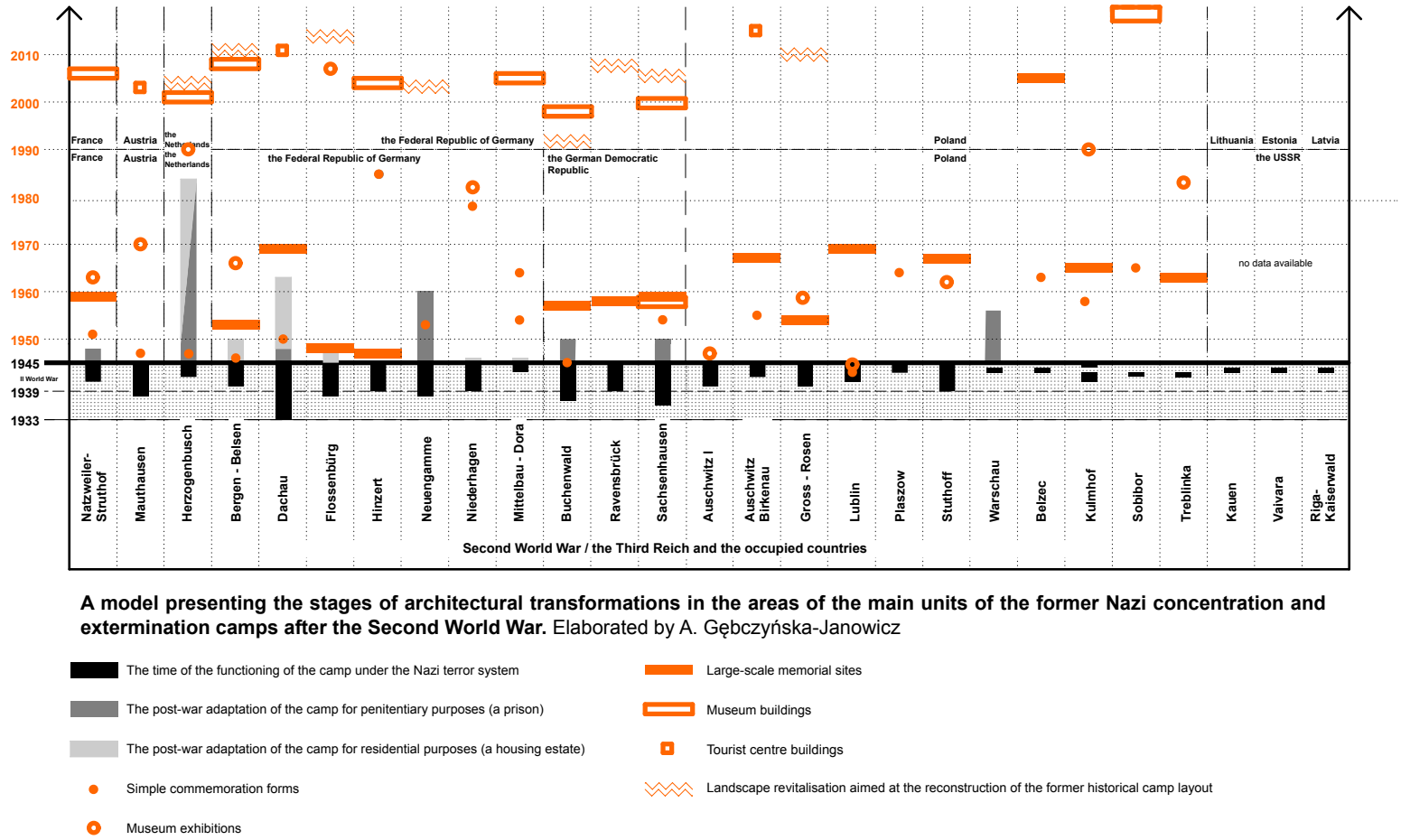
In the 1960s, monumental sites were established on the basis of artistic spatial formulas different from the forms used before the Second World War. Despite the fact that they were primarily focused on the interpretation of universal values, they became the project implementations that today are still considered to be at the forefront of monumental art. Large-scale commemoration sites were created in accordance with the designs integrating experience of various visual arts – architecture, sculpture and garden art. Artistic narrations about the past obliterated traces of the original architecture of the former execution sites. The post-camp architecture was demolished and dismantled. Very little attention was paid to recreation of historical spatial layouts, because the strength of the impact exerted by the monumental remembrance carriers on the society was the most significant aspect.

There are various ways to overcome the past. In this sense, each attempt made to deal with the past can become a subject to criticism that at the same time becomes an element of a debate (Wolff-Powęska 2011: 134). In 1990 the process of visualising the past in the present started its transformation in terms of its formal variety and the intensity of its impact on the cultural background. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia affected the process of remembrance nationalisation. The newly created states learnt the history from the national perspective that had been thus far forbidden (Ibid.: 95). Triggered by a new approach in the presentation of the past, the conflicts increased attention paid to commemoration sites. The areas of the former Nazi concentration camps obtained additional protection in the form of legislative acts issued to define real estate areas dedicated to commemorative purposes and strategies for representation of the past in the present. Adapted after the war for housing estates, military purposes or penitentiary facilities, some buildings have been dedicated to a broader presentation of the history of the Nazi concentration camps. The architecture of the former camps is being rebuilt, reconstructed or metaphorically restored to its former locations in the form of artistic installations. Obliterated for fifty years by the successive layers of architectural transformations, the historical urban layouts of the former KL units are being recreated under special revitalisation programmes dedicated to commemorative structures. The topography of the past crimes is now being defined and clarified for the next post-war generations.

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, new architectural project implementations emerged and expanded commemorative functions with the possibilities of arranging exhibitions, carrying out scientific research or educational seminars. Next to the areas of the former concentration camps, new buildings have been constructed to allow visitors to learn about historical events in a more legible, clarified way and to provide them with comfortable tours. The commemoration process during the time of political transformations was conducted by the generation that did not directly experience the terror of the Third Reich. The descendants of the generation of concentration camp survivors present their highly engaged attitudes toward discovering facts from the past. Memory is created as a multi-contextual social phenomenon that sparks interest in scientific circles. Following the definition of post-memory introduced by Marianne Hirsch (1997), more notions emerge and contribute to her definition: late memory, prosthetic memory, perforated memory, history received, second-hand testimony, second-degree history, witnesses of memory (Wolff-Powęska 2017: 8). In the cultural situation that has been developed in such a way, the society has been strongly demanding the reappearance of execution sites, which were once pushed and stuck to the verge of commemorative processes, in the official discourse of the historical policy. Such demands are supported by extensive scientific research studies that have been carried out on a large scale to improve the current knowledge about the terror of the Third Reich, where the system of concentration camps came as its essential tool. The cooperation among European countries, the United States of America and Israel has provided access to various historical documents. Concentration camps reveal their complex history of crimes committed by the Nazis and also the history of victims once imprisoned in the Soviet special camps. In the areas of the former camps, numerous installations have been constructed to commemorate the particular groups of prisoners: Jews, Roma people, homosexuals and children. Wherever it is possible, stories of individual prisoners are presented. Personal identification has become extremely significant to oppose the effort made by the Nazis to objectify their victims and to leave them nameless. Over the years, people considered as antisocial constituted a commonly forgotten group of victims of the Third Reich regime. This group included unemployed, those accused of misconduct, alcoholics, embezzlers of funds belonging to state organisations. This kind of stigma was attached to people who had not met the requirements of the regime. Prisoners of the KL units were commonly presented in such a way and this image has partially survived in the society.

The improvement of knowledge modifies the character of memory (Wolff-Powęska 2017: 10). The European integration has accelerated the process of searching for the common space for a dialogue among the images of the past created in various parts of the continent. At present, international scientific teams work together on historical exhibitions, sharing their experience. Hence, the modernisation of the spatial commemorative forms takes place in a more and more cohesive way for all the objects remaining after the concentration camps. The restoration of memory and the improvement of the physical representation of the past do not take place exclusively through the renovation and expansion of collective memory carriers, such as monuments or museums. Activities are being undertaken to make the former urban layouts of the concentration camps more defined and legible, new objects are being marked under a broader approach toward the topography that visualises genocidal actions of the KL garrisons and their authorities at the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office. Next to the execution sites and mass graves, forced labour plants, functional buildings and SS administration headquarters are being exhibited to the public. Their former architecture is being reconstructed or symbolically marked in the present space of the commemoration sites to provide a more complete picture of the brutal concentration camp reality.

Over the last seven decades, the architecture of the former Nazi concentration camps has gone through several stages of spatial transformations that have considerably contributed to the loss of its dramatic authenticity. Caused by political and pragmatic reasons, the post-war destruction of historical buildings has left very few physical traces of genocidal activities carried out by the Third Reich regime. The contemporary generation is now restoring the original layouts of the former KL units, reconstructing buildings that were demolished several decades ago and marking their former topography in a metaphorical way. In the current century, the architecture provides support to the expressive monumental sites of the 1960s by more objective past data imaging. At present, numerous museums offer current knowledge on the functioning of the German Nazi concentration camp system, its victims and legacy in the contemporary global cultural system.



A model presenting the stages of architectural transformations in the areas of the main units of the former Nazi concentration and extermination camps after the Second World War. Elaborated by A. Gębczyńska-Janowicz

The time of the functioning of the camp under the Nazi terror system

The post-war adaptation of the camp for penitentiary purposes (a prison)

The post-war adaptation of the camp for residential purposes (a housing estate)

Simple commemoration forms

Museum exhibitions

Large-scale memorial sites

Museum buildings

Tourist centre buildings

Landscape revitalisation aimed at the reconstruction of the former historical camp layout

II.2 A model presenting the stages of architectural transformations in the areas of the main units of the former Nazi concentration and extermination camps after the Second World War. Elaborated by A. Gębczyńska-Janowicz

4. A Multiple Case Study

Dachau

Konzentrationslager Dachau 1933-1945

In spring 1933, several weeks before Hitler was appointed the Chancellor of the Third Reich, a penitentiary unit was established in Dachau. It was the beginning of the Nazi system of concentration camps. The establishment of the penitentiary unit was initiated by Heinrich Himmler as a place to imprison political opponents of the NSDAP that was growing stronger every day. Later on, the camp was used as a prison for Catholic and Protestant clergymen, Jews, Roma people and Russian prisoners of war. Officially, the camp was assigned with an educational function but, in fact, it was transformed into a mass extermination tool. The second commandant of the camp, the latter Concentration Camp Inspector and commander of the guard units, Theodor Eicke, contributed strongly to the dissemination of terror used against prisoners in the camp. He devised a barbaric system of punishment for prisoners that was later on followed in other concentration camps. Acquired by the SS members based at Dachau, the experience in the fields of architecture and organisation of a concentration camp affected the formula for establishing similar camp units in the system. The area of Dachau was expanded several times because of the growing numbers of prisoners incarcerated there. After the outbreak of the war, the camp was a superordinate unit to a network of numerous sub-camps to the south of Germany. Those units were mainly related to the armament industry.

In 1943 a crematorium was constructed, since then usually referred to as the Barrack X. A year later, a gas chamber was added to the building. Until today, scientists have not been able to determine the scale of its operation. In the camp, a pseudo-medical experiment centre was also actively operating. Among approximately 6 000 prisoners who had been subjected to such experiments, every third person died. It was estimated that there were over 200 000 prisoners in the camp and over 30 000 of them did not survive the imprisonment.

On 29th April 1945, the KL Dachau was liberated by the American army. At that time, there were 30 000 prisoners in the main camp and the same number of inmates were detained in its sub-camps. Three years after the liberation, several dozen representatives of the Nazi regime were imprisoned in the camp. In 1948, on the basis of the surviving camp facilities, the Bavarian government established a DP camp that was in operation until 1965. Having left the areas of southern and eastern Europe, German civilians started to appear at the DP camp established in Dachau after the war. Most of 32 barracks were transformed into residential flats for the incoming families. Soon, in the residential estate that was housing almost 1 500 inhabitants a school was organised along with a shop, a public bath, and a restaurant. During the subsequent years new buildings were constructed to adjust the areas of the former concentration camp to the residential purposes.

1. The crematorium

2. The main alley leading to the Chapel of the Mortal Agony of Christ

KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau
1960 / 1965 / 1967 / 1968 / 2009

Vanishing Architecture of the Crime Scene – The Struggle of Former Prisoners to Preserve the Original Topography of the KL Dachau

In the first years after the war, the main commemoration site to honour the victims of the camp was the area of the former crematoria. Upon the initiative of the camp survivors, the first historical exhibition was arranged there. It was temporarily closed by the Bavarian government but, as a result of protests lodged by the international communities, the exhibition was reopened a year later. The area in the vicinity of the crematoria was transformed into a green park, following the model of Alpine landscape cemeteries, and for many years it was a sacrum next to a developing housing estate. During the next decade, some simple forms of commemoration were installed at that place to mark the mass graves and execution places. In 1950 opposite the crematorium building, the Monument to an Unknown Prisoner was unveiled – a figurative sculpture designed by Fritz Koelle.

The Beginning of the Official Commemoration – Sacral Objects

In 1955, some former prisoners established the International Dachau Committee (Comité International de Dachau). For many years, the association of the survivors postulated the liquidation of the DP camp and establishment of a proper commemoration site. In 1960, upon the initiative of a former prisoner, a Catholic bishop, Johannes Neuhäusler, the first sacral object was constructed in the post-camp area, paving the way to the further formulas for the commemoration compliant with religious principles. During the celebrations related to the International Eucharistic Congress, in the northern end of the main camp alley, the Mortal Agony of Christ Chapel was constructed. The Catholic chapel took the shape of an open pavilion built on the circular plan, with a wooden cross hung under the ceiling. Designed by Josef Wiedemann, the building was surrounded by some oak trees to stand out with its greenery form the background of the main camp area covered with gravel. Outside the northern boundaries of the camp the Carmelite Convent of the Precious Blood was built in 1964.

A monument to commemorate the Jewish victims of the camp was designed by Hermann Zvi Guttmann and unveiled in 1967, to the right of the chapel. Fenced with a railing in the shape of barbed wire, a ramp leads to a room placed below the ground level, in an open structure covered with black basalt. Inside, a light belt of marble stands out from the austere walls, leading up to a menorah visible through the opening at the top.

3. The Jewish monument

4. The Evangelical Church of Reconciliation

In the same year, an Evangelical Church of Reconciliation was added to enlarge the spatial composition. Designed by Helmut Striffler, the church was located next to the path leading visitors to the crematoria. The main hall of the building was also arranged below the ground level. It is accessible by a flight of stairs formed as irregular stripes. Used as the material covering the façade of the church, concrete naturally blends into the aesthetics of the entire monumental site, however, the organic composition of the object is formally detached from the perpendicular urban layout of the former camp. In 1988 a monument was set up next to the passageway to commemorate homosexuals murdered in the camp. In 1995, outside the western boundaries of the main camp, a wooden Russian Orthodox church of the Resurrection of Our Lord was consecrated.

KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau

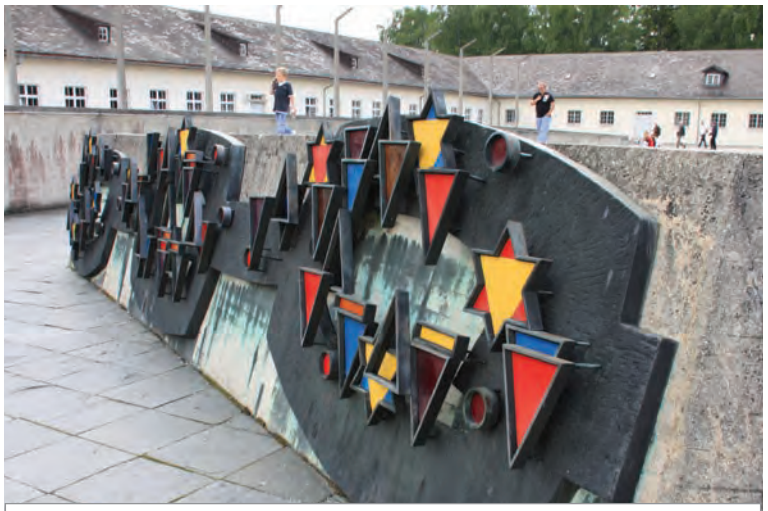
In 1964 the housing estate was closed and the remains of the prisoner barracks were demolished. A year later the KZ-Gedenkstätte Dachau was opened. The commemoration site was arranged on the one-quarter of the area of the concentration camp in 1945. To the north of the roll call square, two blocks were reconstructed, however with considerable differences to their original structures. The foundations of the demolished prisoner barracks were clearly defined with concrete frames filled with gravel. They were also marked with low concrete posts with the numbers originating from the historical system of the camp order. Along the main alley, the poplar trees were planted to recreate the landscape from the time of the camp operation. Other elements of the historical structure that were reconstructed at that time included the watchtowers with some fragments of the fences, the gas chambers, the crematoria, the administration buildings next to the roll call square and the detention building behind it. The Jourhaus main gate, which since 1937 had been the main and the only connection between the prison and the administrative zones, was then closed until the 1970s, because an American military unit was based there. The metalwork of the gate with the infamous *Arbeit macht frei* inscription incorporated into its structure had a complicated history. After the liberation of the camp, the inscription was removed and in 1965 – reconstructed. In 2014 the metalwork was stolen. Fortunately, two years after the audacious theft, it was found in Norway and restored to its previous place.

Centralised Memory

In 1968 the central monument to honour the victims of the KL Dachau was erected. It was located next to the former roll call square whose enormous area - once intended to gather dozens of thousands of prisoners - was now covered with grey gravel. Implemented between the square and the administrative buildings to the south, the spatial composition forms a triptych of the installations connected by a winding ramp. Entering the square through the main gate, visitors meet a wall with an inscription written in four languages (French, English, German and Russian): *May the example of those who were exterminated here between 1933-1945, because they resisted Nazism, help to unite the living for the defence of peace and freedom and in respect for their fellowmen*.

On the axis of the entire monumental site, a sculpture designed by Nandor Glid was situated. The bronze installation depicts a metaphorical entanglement of barbed wire composed of human bodies. The eastern side of the square is closed with a wall, where a plaque is installed featuring the *Never Again* inscription in five languages – English, German, French, Russian and Hebrew. In front of the

5. The International Monument to the Victims of the KL Dachau



6. A ramp in the composition of the central monument

7. A plaque situated at the side of the roll call square

plaque, an urn containing the ashes of the victims murdered in the KL Dachau is based. On the wall of the passageway located along the main axis of the sculpture, a bas-relief is installed, featuring three chain links decorated with triangles – symbols used for marking prisoners segregated into the categories imposed by the Nazis. The two reconstructed blocks housing exhibitions are located to the south of the historical roll call square.

Extended Contexts of Commemoration

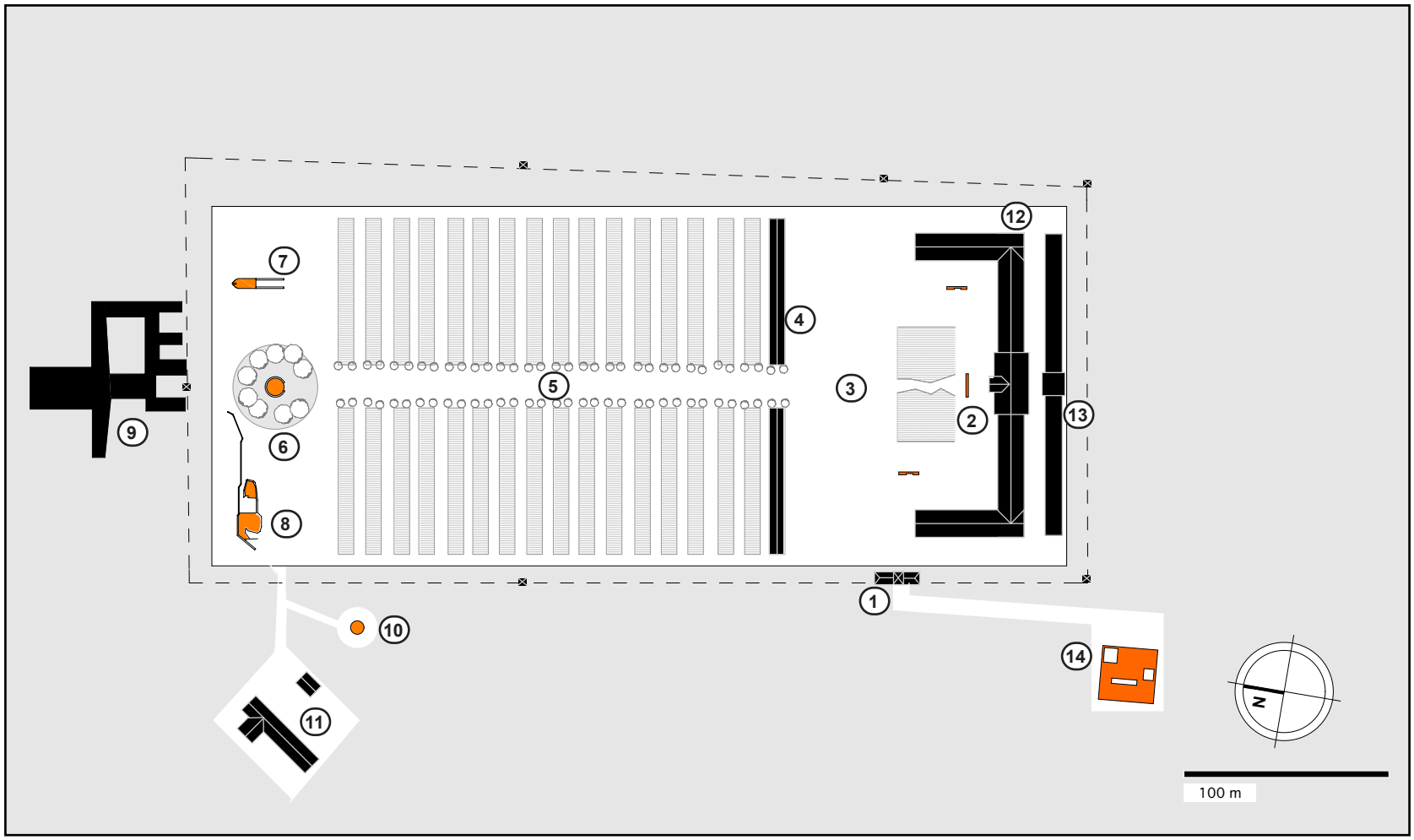
In 2009 a new Visitor Centre was made accessible to visitors. Designed by Florian Nagler Architekten Group, the atrial building features a glass façade hidden behind a rhythmic arrangement of pillars made of whitewashed wood. Its minimalistic interior accommodates an information desk point, a café, a bookshop and sanitary facilities for visitors. The building was implemented under the Weg des Erinnerns programme that was aimed at improving the readability of the route from the railway station to the memorial site.

8. An atrium of the tourist centre building

9. The former roll call square

10. The symbolic marking of the historical location of the prisoner barracks

11. A stop along the Weg des Erinnerns



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Dachau

Legend:

1. The Jourhaus gate to the former prisoner areas
2. The International Monument to the Victims of the KL Dachau
3. The roll call square
4. The reconstructed prisoner barracks
5. The main camp alley
6. The Chapel of the Mortal Agony of Christ
7. The Jewish monument
8. The Evangelical Church of Reconciliation
9. The Carmelite Convent of the Precious Blood
10. The Russian Orthodox church of the Resurrection of Our Lord
11. The crematorium and the cemetery with the mass graves
12. The buildings of the former camp administration housing the museum exhibitions today
13. The building of the former prison – “the Bunker”
14. The Tourist Centre buildin

Photographs: Dachau, July 2011

Sachsenhausen

Konzentrationslager Sachsenhausen 1936-1945

In 1936, several dozen kilometres from Berlin, a concentration camp was constructed from scratch, as a model facility of that type for other units. In contrast to the camps established before, this one was intended to provide a modern model promoted by Heinrich Himmler as a town of terror based on well-thought infrastructure. Considering the close vicinity of the Concentration Camp Inspectorate in Oranienburg that supervised the operation of all German concentration camps, the KL Sachsenhausen was also a place where members of future concentration camp garrisons were trained. The high position taken by the KL Sachsenhausen in the administrative system affected the formation of the architectural layout of that unit. The area intended to incarcerate prisoners was established on an isosceles triangular plan. The gate with the *Arbeit macht frei* inscription incorporated into its metalwork was installed on an axis and opposite to the top corner of the triangular plan. In order to control the situation among the radially located prisoner barracks, a watchtower (Turm A) was also constructed at that specific location. In the course of time, the camp area was expanding and more hectares were added to the main layout of the camp. The KL Sachsenhausen was a superordinate unit to a network of sub-camps, where prisoners were forced to work for the German industry under the supervision of the administrative SS unit.

At the beginning of 1942, the infamous Station Z – an execution site – was arranged, equipped with gas chambers and crematoria that were soon added to the site. Until 1945, approximately 200 000 prisoners from several dozen countries were incarcerated in the camp. It is now difficult to define a number of prisoners that lost their lives there because of exhaustion caused by forced labour, diseases and famine, but it can undoubtedly be expressed in dozens of thousands of victims. Another considerably large group of victims was formed of prisoners subjected to pseudo-medical experiments that had been carried out at the camp on a large scale. The KL Sachsenhausen was liberated on 22nd April 1945 by the 47th division of the Red Army. In the years 1945 – 1950 in the main part of the former concentration camp another unit was established – the Soviet special camp (Speziallager No. 7). In 1948, it was the largest camp out of the three such units established by the Soviets in their occupation zone in Germany. Out of almost 60 000 prisoners interned in the camp, 12 000 died because of disastrous living conditions. Most prisoner barracks were demolished at that time and the grounds of the original triangular camp layout became considerably devastated. During the liquidation of the Soviet camp, the crematorium that had been still in operation was blown up. um.

1. The main gate leading to the former prisoner areas

2. The main gate with the Arbeit macht frei inscription

Nationalen Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Sachsenhausen
1956 / 1961 / 1993 / 2001 / 2005

The State Interpretation of the History

In 1956, the GDR government decided to establish a national monument in the area of the former main camp. The monument was officially unveiled on 22nd April 1961 as Nationalen Mahn-und Gedenkstätte Sachsenhausen. Designed by Ludwig Deiters, Horst Kutzat and Kurt Tausendschön, the spatial layout was based on an assumption that the original relics of the past should be minimised in favour of the artistic rendering of the past. Hence, there were not many elements of the former infrastructure left at the commemoration site. Most buildings in the area of the former camp were demolished within a decade and replaced with symbolic stone blocks with the numbers reflecting the historical topography. The area of the former roll call square was surrounded with an openwork wall incorporating a repeated cross motif (it was removed in the 1990s). On the axis of the former compositional structure, a monument was erected in the form of a 40-meter obelisk built on a triangular plan. Each side of the obelisk was topped with eighteen red triangles that had been used by the Nazis for marking political prisoners. In front of the obelisk, a statue was located. Designed by René Graetz, *The Liberation* (in German: *Befreiung)* featured a Soviet soldier showing two prisoners a way to freedom with a protective gesture. In the same year, the location of the Station Z was also commemorated. The ruins of the crematorium and the gas chambers were secured with a reinforced concrete roofing.

Considering the idea of accentuating the artistic formula of commemoration, the site accommodated very few exhibitions. There was an exhibition arranged in the former prison kitchen. Another one was opened in the New Museum (Neues Museum) – an object constructed at the turn of 1958 and 1959 on the square in front of the entrance gate to the post-camp area, next to the watchtower Turm A. Designed as an atrial building, the museum featured stained-glass windows in the entrance hall. They were composed as a triptych conveying a strong anti-fascism propaganda message. The museum covered only a few percent of the former camp area. Other buildings were used for military purposes until 1990.

Revitalisation of Commemoration

In 1993, the site underwent some modernisation due to a change to the commemoration concept. At that time, strong emphasis was put on education and presentation of the historical context. As a result, over a dozen exhibitions were arranged in various facilities, including the reconstructed prisoner barracks. Also, the name of the place was changed to Gedenk-

3. The central monument dedicated to the prisoners of the KL Sachsenhausen

stätte und Museum Sachsenhausen to stress the concept of commemorating that involves the presentation of the history of the site in the museum.

In 1998, an architectural competition was announced for a design of a new spatial development of the monumental site. The primary aim was to restore the topography of the former camp in the most readable way. The competition was won by the HG Merz studio. The designers presented a concept involving clear definition of the foundations of the former barracks to indicate the characteristic geometry of the original spatial layout of the camp. The area where the demolished barracks once used to stand was to be covered with gravel and rubble to stand out from the basalt paths and the waste area of the former roll call square. By 2005, some watchtowers were reconstructed along with the fragments of the fence, the entrance gate and prison barracks. The execution site, the Station Z, also received new spatial protection as the central point of the commemoration site. The elements of reinforced concrete were dismantled and replaced by a light steel construction covered by fibreglass membrane that was protected by a layer of Teflon. Such a symbolic, minimalist tent covered the ruins of the gas chambers, the crematorium and the sculpture designed by Waldemar Grzimek in 1961, depicting two prisoners who support their fellow inmate. The commemoration site was separated from the main camp with a partition formed of the repeating pattern of concrete plates. The designers' intention was to restore the historical layout of the site from the time when the execution place had been physically separated from the prison area.

Similarly, the fragmented wall was intended as an introductory element leading to the Visitor Centre that was also modernised at that time. The symbols of the general concept of improving the readability of the historical topography were two spatial models located at that place, presenting the camp layout from the time of its operation and the contemporary commemoration site.

Since 2003, there has been a pine park planted at the entrance square, opposite the Neue Museum building, where individual commemorative acts are placed. Associations, prisoners' families and governments of various countries are allowed to fund commemorative sculptures and artistic installations that come as the visualisation of the memory about the camp victims.

New Formulas for the Representation of the Past

In the southern corner of the site, the prisoner barracks no. 38 and 39 were reconstructed to house an exhibition on the history of Jewish prisoners. It was arranged upon the initiative of some Jewish communities in the 1960s. In 1992, a group of neo-Nazis set the barracks on fire. They were once again reconstructed five years later, on the basis of a concept developed by the Braun, Voigt & Partner studio. Some fragments were reconstructed with direct reference to the original architecture of the barracks, whereas other parts of the barracks took the form of a modern cast iron façade. The charred remains of the old façade were preserved behind a glass panel. The exhibition space was expanded by an additional underground level.

In 2001, the Museum of the Soviet Camp was opened to present the history of the Soviet special camp that had been functioning there in the years 1945 – 1950. The exhibition building was situated in the vicinity of the mass graves, at the top of the triangular layout of the former old camp. The museum was designed by the Schneider+Schumacher studio. The designers' intention was to arrange exhibitions in a building that would be inconspicuous against the background of its historical surroundings. A one-floor building in the form of a massive cuboid, sunk one meter below the ground level. Its external walls were constructed of dark, shiny architectural decorative concrete reflecting the surroundings. The inside of the building is well-lit through the glass roof supported by the cast iron I-beams.

4. The entrance zone in front of the visitor centre building

5. The square with the spatial models in front of the visitor centre building

6. The commemorative pavilion of the Station Z

7. A figurative sculpture in the pavilion of the Station Z

8. The ruins of the crematorium

9. The marking of the surface distinguishing the historical camp topography

10. The symbolic marking indicating the location of the destroyed prisoner barracks

11. The contemporary landscape of the post-camp areas

12. A reconstructed prisoner barrack

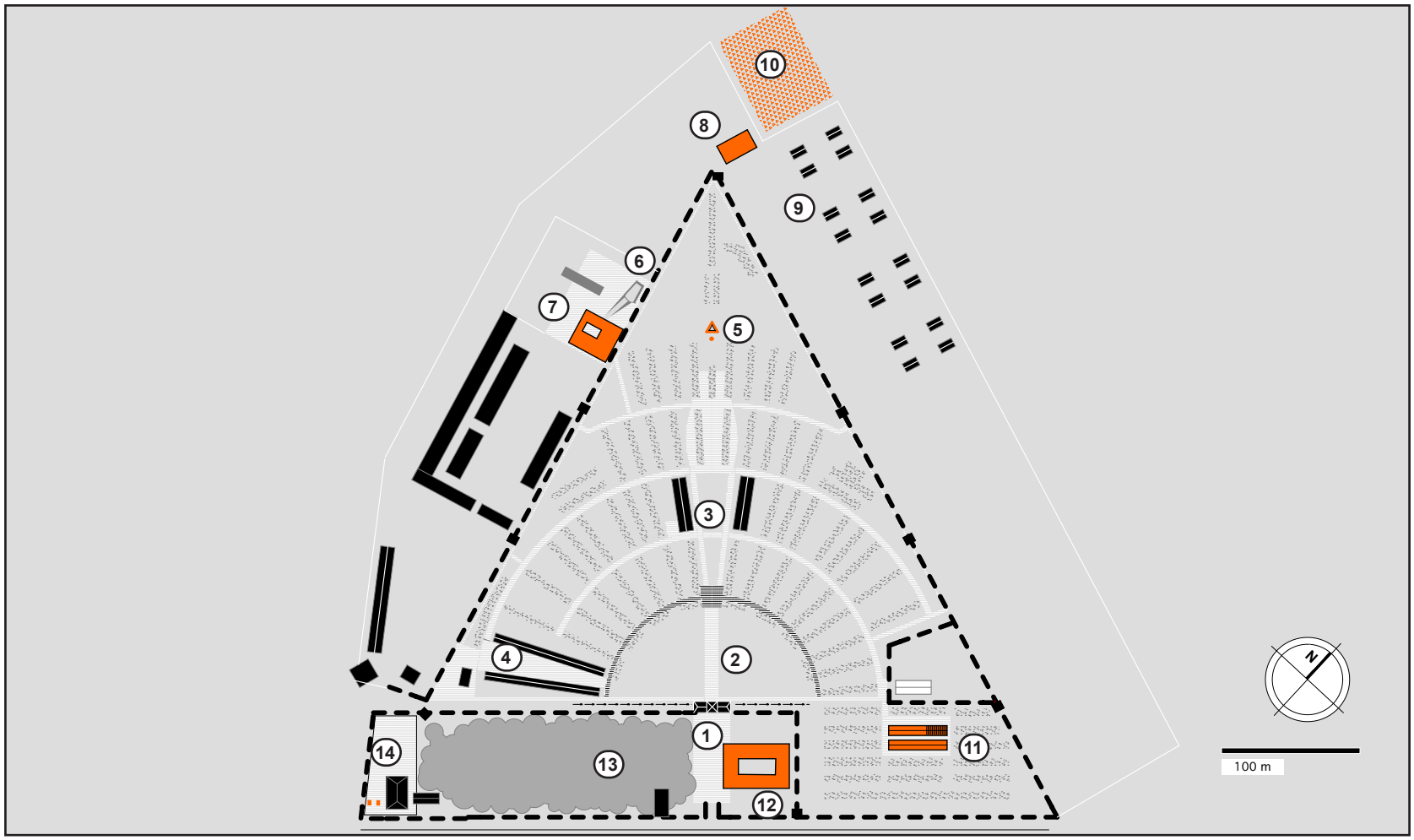
13. A reconstructed prisoner barrack

14. The exhibition space in the prisoner barracks

15. The reconstruction of the historical camp fence system

16. The entrance to the museum building

17. Museum of the Soviet Special Camp



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Sachsenhausen

Legend:

1. The main gate
2. The roll call square
3. The reconstructed laundry and kitchen barracks
4. The reconstructed barracks with exhibition rooms
5. The central monument
6. The trench where executions used to be carried out
7. The commemorative pavilion of the Station Z
8. The Museum of the history of the Soviet Special Camp no. 7
9. The barracks of the Soviet Special Camp
10. The mass graves
11. Barracks no. 38 and 39
12. The building of the New Museum
13. The Memorial Park
14. The Visitor Centre

Photographs: Sachsenhausen, July 2011, March 2016

Buchenwald

Konzentrationslager Buchenwald 1937 - 1945

The KL Buchenwald was established in July 1937 on Ettersberg Hill that used to be the traditional recreation grounds for inhabitants of Weimar located nearby. Initially, it was a place of internment for German citizens who had been considered enemies of the new social order: members of the German resistance movement and antisocial prisoners. Later on, they were joined by members of other groups persecuted by the Nazis: Jews, Witnesses of the Jehovah, Roma people and homosexuals. After the outbreak of the war, the camp was filled with prisoners of various European nationalities. Over the subsequent years, the KL Buchenwald became one of the biggest units of forced labour that supported the industry of the Third Reich. It covered the area of 200 ha and was a superordinate unit to over a hundred sub-camps. In summer 1940, the first crematorium was built in the camp. Prisoners were dying *en masse*, exhausted by backbreaking work and barbaric living conditions. Hundreds of prisoners became victims of an experimental centre established in the camp to carry out some pseudo-research on the spotted typhus. The centre was supervised by the Waffen-SS Institute of Hygiene.

At the beginning of 1945, great numbers of prisoners were transported from Auschwitz and Groß-Rosen that were being liquidated in the east. The incoming information about the approaching of the Allied armies resulted in the gradual evacuation of the camp. Shortly before the arrival of the American units, several hundred prisoners organised an uprising and attacked the garrison members who had not fled the camp yet. The prisoners seized control over the posts and most elements of the camp infrastructure. The KL Buchenwald was liberated on 11th April 1945. American soldiers were met by 21 000 prisoners, 9 000 of whom were very young people. During the nine years of its operation, the concentration camp was an imprisonment facility for over 250 000 people of various European nationalities. The number of victims has been estimated to reach the level of 56 000.

In July, the American army passed Thuringia, including the post-camp areas, under the administration of the Soviet units, according to the administrative division of the occupation zones in Germany, established during the Conference of Yalta.

In the premises of the former KL Buchenwald, the NKVD established the Special Camp no. 2, where since 1950 about 28 000 prisoners were incarcerated. They were mainly the NSDAP members, however, at the end of the camp operation, they were joined by opponents of the communist authorities of the newly-established GDR. Almost 7 000 prisoners did not survive their imprisonment and were buried in anonymous graves in a forest nearby the northern boundaries of the post-camp area.

1. The historical main gate leading to the former prisoner areas

2. The building of the former crematorium

Nationale Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Buchenwald
1945 / 1947 / 1953-55 / 1958 / 1993 / 1995 / 1997 / 2002

A Monument Erected by the Former Prisoners to Commemorate the Deceased Fellow Inmates

The first monument in the area of the former KL Buchenwald was erected on the roll call square, shortly after the liberation. Some former prisoners constructed a wooden obelisk with two inscriptions: the letters K.L.B. - an acronym of the camp name and 51 000 – the estimated number of victims at that time. The official unveiling took place on 19th April 1945, accompanied by the mourning ceremony and an appeal with a strong political message prepared by an organised group of the former prisoners from the social democratic environment. The ceremony was ended with the reading of the *Oath of Buchenwald* that included the following fragment: *The destruction of Nazism, down to its roots, is our motto*. 50 years later, at the place where the first monument had been located, a sculptural installation was implemented to honour the memory of all the prisoners of the camp. The designers, Hans Hoheisel and Andreas Knitz, created a slab of stainless steel with an inscription in the centre: K.L.B., followed by the nationalities of former prisoners listed in the alphabetical order. Installed into the surface of the roll call square, the slab in constantly heated to maintain 37°C, the approximate temperature of the human body.

3. The view to the post-camp areas

The Cemetery of Heroes

At the end of the camp operation, the members of the SS garrison buried the bodies of deceased prisoners in mass graves located in the natural hollows in the southern slope of Ettersberg Hill, in the vicinity of the Bismarck Tower that had been standing there since 1901. Later on, the soldiers established a cemetery at that place to bury prisoners who died after the liberation of the camp. In 1947, upon the initiative of the former prisoners, who were mostly the members of the SED Communist Party, the commemoration of the mass graves was commenced. The neat and orderly necropolis was given a name of Ehrenhain – the cemetery of heroes.

Monumental Commemoration in the Service of Anti-fascism

Constructed at the beginning of the 20th century, the tower commemorating Otto von Bismarck was demolished in 1949. Two years later, the former prisoners associated under the VVN started work on the commemoration formula for the KL Buchenwald. In December 1951, a competition was announced for an architectural and sculptural concept to commemorate the mass graves. The invitation to the competition was restricted to several groups of artists who actively participated in the policy pursued by the GDR at that time. The

4. The cemetery of 1945 with the mass graves of prisoners

project eventually implemented in 1958 was a combination of two concepts awarded by the competition committee: an idea of a central gathering square with a group sculpture designed by Fritz Cremer and a spatial composition designed by the Brigade Makarenko, a group of artists that consisted of Ludwig Deiters, Kurt Tausendschön, Hans Grotewohl, Horst Kutzat and Hubert Matthes.

The monumental site was constructed under the propaganda supervision of the communist authorities of East Germany. Eventually, the largest monumental site commemorating victims of the concentration camp in the territory of post-war Germany also became a place legitimising the policy pursued by the GDR. Nationale Mahn-und Gedenkstätte became a place dedicated to anniversary celebrations related to the liberation of the camp but also a place where military oaths were taken and other state ceremonies were organised.

Visitors enter the monumental site through a gate designed in the aesthetics of the socialist realism. From the gate, a flight of stairs leads down to the valley. Along the stairs, eight pylons have been based, decorated with bas-reliefs depicting scenes of the camp life (designed by René Graetz, Waldemar Grzimek and Hans Kies) with inscriptions by Johannes R. Becher (the author of the East German national anthem) on their back sides. In the lower part of the site, a circular wall, similar to the Colosseum, encompasses three mass graves, where the camp victims have been put to their final rest. These locations are connected by a wide road referred to as the Alley of the Nations, lined with the pylons that are topped with vigil lights dedicated to the nineteen countries, the citizens of which had died in the KL Buchenwald. Passing the last monumental urn, visitors follow the stairs down to a spacious square decorated with a sculpture designed by Fritz Cremer. It features a group of the camp prisoners who have just been liberated. The composition is completed with the Tower of Freedom topped with a bell.

The Former Prison Area at the Monumental Site

The area of the modern Gedenkstätte (the name has been used since the 1990s) is composed of three parts: the National Memorial Site that has just been discussed, the area or the former administrative and residential estate, where the SS garrison members had been based, and the prison premises. Very few original objects have survived until today within the boundaries of the former camp, where prisoners had been incarcerated. After the liquidation of the Soviet special camp in 1950, the GDR authorities decided to remove most of the original infrastructure, with the exception of the main gate with a symbolic Jedem das seine inscription (Each to their own) incorporated into its metalwork and the crematorium building, where a remembrance site was arranged to honour the leading politician of the KPD, Ernst Thälmann, who had been shot in the camp upon Hitler's order. There was a plan to plant a forest in the area left after the demolition of the prisoner barracks, however, it was never implemented. Several objects were preserved to provide some exhibition space. In 1985, in the former warehouse, where prisoner clothes and equipment had been kept, a museum was established to house a permanent exhibition. It was formally modernised a decade later. Other exhibitions were arranged in the disinfection building and in the former prisoner canteen, where the Hall of Honour of the Nations was opened in 1964. The only functional wooden barrack located in the area of the former camp is a reconstructed object that was found in 1993 in another town, where it had been moved to as a complete building. In the years

5. The gate leading to the site of the Monument of Remembrance and Warning

6. The sculptured steles situated at the stairs leading to the Alley of the Nations

7. A hollow with the mass graves of the KL Buchenwald prisoners

1953 – 1955, some flat stone plaques were founded and set at the outlines of the former prisoner blocks to commemorate the particular groups of prisoners.

During the 1990s, after the reunification of Germany, preparations were started in the museum to modernise the exhibition and to expand on the education concept. In several reconstructed buildings of the former SS garrison, the following facilities were organised: a library, an archive, some administrative rooms, a museum, a cinema, a Meeting Centre for the Youth and a Visitor Centre with a bookshop.

Individualisation in Commemoration

In the area of the former prison premises, the foundations of the demolished barracks were defined with concrete frames and filled in with gravel. The location of two barracks was made to stand out in particular. In 1993, a monument designed by Tine Steen and Klaus Schlosser was erected at the place where Block no. 22 used to stand. Sunk in the ground, with olive branches embedded into its surface, a concrete wall borders the outlines of the former Jewish barrack to the north. The entire historical outline was deepened and covered with the gravel extracted from the nearby quarry, where Jewish prisoners had died, being sent to do the hardest work. Two years later, in the area of the former so-called Gypsy block, a spatial installation was implemented to commemorate Sinti and Roma prisoners. It was designed by Daniel Plaas. The outline of the prisoner barrack was covered with basalt gravel, out of which stone steles stem, featuring inscriptions with the names of the former Nazi concentration camps where Gypsy people had been murdered during the Second World War. During the first decade of the 21st century, some more commemorative plates were unveiled in the post-camp area to honour groups of prisoners who had been so far forgotten in the official discourse, such as Witnesses of the Jehovah and homosexuals murdered in the KL Buchenwald. In 2002, an American architect, Stephen B. Jacobs, who was imprisoned in the KL Buchenwald as a child, designed a memorial site dedicated to the so-called Small Camp in the area of the quarantine that started its operation in 1942.

Discovering More Contexts of the Tragic History

In 1997, a museum building was constructed on the northern slope of the site to accommodate an exhibition on the history of the Soviet Special Camp. Two years before, 1100 steel posts were installed in the forest opposite the museum to commemorate the mass graves of the victims of the Soviet camp.

8. The Alley of the Nations

9. The pylons topped with the vigil lights along the Alley of the Nations

10. The main square of the monumental site with a belfry and a sculpture

11. The monument – a slab honouring all the prisoners of the KL Buchenwald

12. The monument commemorating the Small Camp

13. The monument commemorating the Roma prisoners

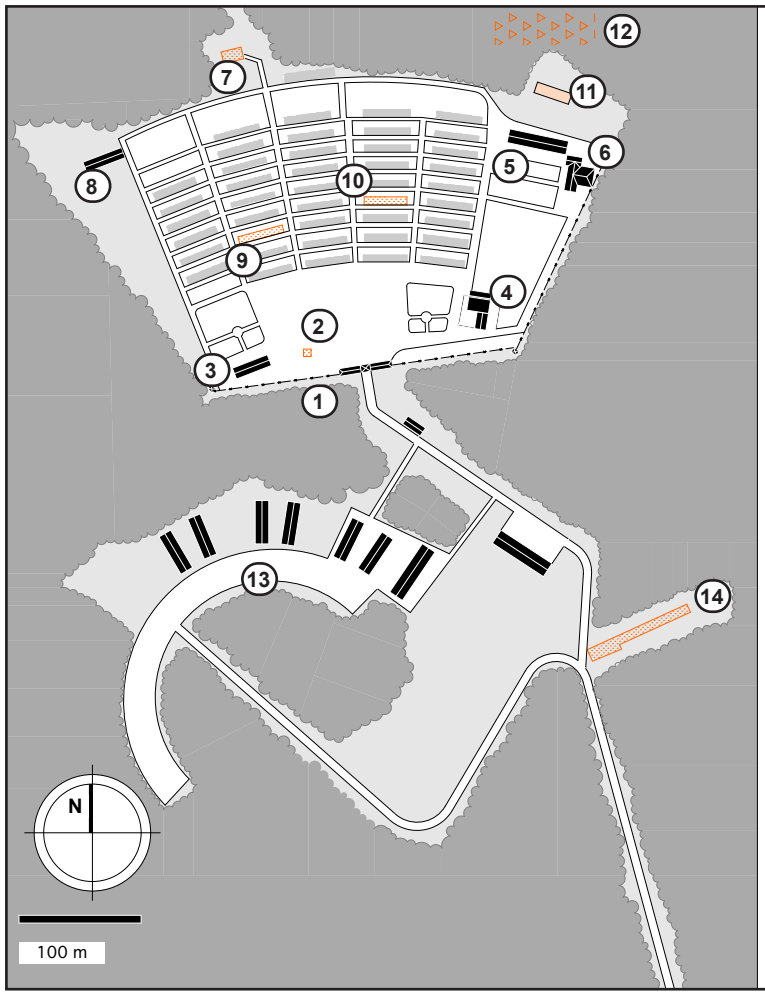
14. The symbolic marking of the mass graves of the victims of the Soviet Special Camp no. 2

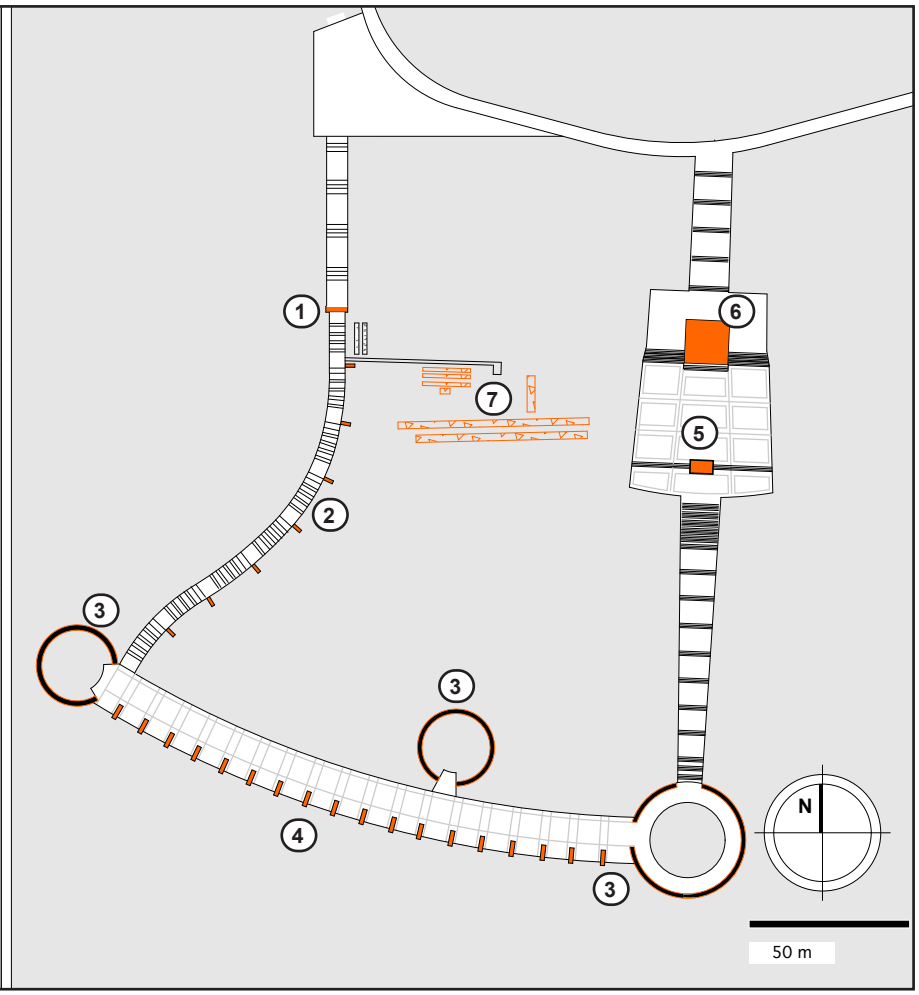
15. The ruins of the prisoner barracks

16. The symbolic marking of the historical location of the prisoner barracks

17. The museum building with the exhibition on the history of the Soviet Special Camp no. 2

18. One of the stone plaques commemorating the particular groups of prisoners





The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Buchenwald

Legend:

1. The historical main camp gate
2. The roll call square with the slab commemorating the first monument
3. The former camp canteen
4. The crematorium
5. The building of the former warehouse – a museum exhibition
6. The historical disinfection facility – a museum exhibition
7. The monument to the Small Camp
8. A wooden prisoner barrack reconstructed in the 1990s
9. The monument dedicated to the Roma prisoners – the symbolic marking of the Block no. 14
10. The monument dedicated to the Jewish prisoners – the symbolic marking of the Block no. 22
11. The Museum of the Soviet Special Camp no. 2
12. The mass graves of the victims of the Soviet Special Camp
13. The former areas of the SS garrison members – the contemporary buildings of the museum administration and the visitor centre
14. Zgubiony opis do 14

The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site dedicated to the victims of the KL Buchenwald on Ettersberg Hill

Legend:

1. The entrance gate
2. The gallery of steles along the stairs
3. The mass graves
4. The Alley of the Nations with 18 pylons
5. A sculpture depicting a group of prisoners
6. A belfry
7. The cemetery of 1945

Photographs: Buchenwald, August 2016

Mauthausen

Konzentrationslager Mauthausen 1938 - 1945

In August 1938, in Mauthausen, a little town situated near Linz, the first concentration camp was established outside the borders of the Third Reich. Shortly after the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany, the SS authorities decided on the location of the next concentration camp in the vicinity of some rich deposits of granite, which was supposed to be the building material indispensable for the implementation of numerous architectural investments planned by Adolf Hitler.

During the first year of its operation, the camp was a place of internment mainly for German and Austrian citizens who had not met standards followed by the social order of Nazi Germany. The camp infrastructure was built by prisoners moved from the KL Dachau. The availability of granite extracted by prisoners under the scheme of forced labour contributed to the character of the camp architecture. On the hill, above the quarry, a facility resembling a medieval fortress was eventually constructed. Over 2 meters high, the stone walls were topped with a belt of electrified barbed wire. They surrounded the detention centre, which from its very beginning was assigned with the status of the toughest isolation regime. In summer 1940, the facility was expanded by a forced labour unit functioning in Gusen. Together, they formed an organisational entity.

Within several years, the KL Mauthausen-Gusen became an administrative centre for a network of several dozen sub-camps, where prisoners were forced to provide slave labour for German industry. In September 1944, a new section was opened for female prisoners, where women were moved from other concentration camps.

The mortality rates among prisoners were very high because of backbreaking forced labour in the quarry and in the underground armament plants handled by the network of the sub-camps. Prisoners also died as a result of the internal system of terror exercised by the SS garrison members, disastrous living conditions fostering epidemics and pseudo-medical and medical experiments. In February 1942, the first executions were carried out in the gas chambers. The first victims were the Soviet prisoners of war. In spring 1945, decimated transports of prisoners evacuated from Auschwitz arrived at Mauthausen. The overcrowding only deteriorated already difficult living conditions, contributing to a soaring increase in prisoners' mortality rates during the last months of the camp operation. Out of 190 000 prisoners who went through the hell in the KL Mauthausen-Gusen 90 000 people did not survive to see freedom.

At the end of April 1945 the camp was abandoned by some of its garrison members. On 5th May 1945 American soldiers entered the premises of the camp. The KL Mauthausen-Gusen was the last Nazi concentration camp liberated by the Allied armies. With the support of their liberators, prisoners executed the SS garrison members who had not left the camp before. In summer, the post-camp infrastructure was taken over by the Red Army. Some fragments of the post-camp facilities were gradually demolished and the construction materials obtained in that way were recycled in the local reconstruction work. The equipment of the armament plants and other factories operating at the camp was successively dismantled and transported to the USSR. In June 1947, the Soviet authorities of the occupation zone passed the area of the former KL Mauthausen-Gusen under the administration of the Austrian government, imposing them with an obligation of establishing a commemoration site at that place.

The State Commemoration Site - Liquidation of the Substantial Parts of the Original Architecture

In the years 1947-1949, a part of the post-camp area was transformed into the Mauthausen Commemoration Site. In 1948, upon the initiative of the Soviet occupants, a monument was erected in front of the entrance gate leading to the prisoner part of the camp to commemorate the Soviet general, Dmitry Mikhaylovich Karbyshev. The camp infrastructure was almost totally destroyed. The first post-war decade was survived by the stone walls with the

1. The main gate leading to the former prisoner areas

KZ-Gedenkstätte Mauthausen
1947-1949 / 1970 / 2003 /2013

watchtowers, the main entrance gate, the buildings near the garages and the SS administration building. Most wooden prisoner barracks were dismantled under the adaptation work scheme. The prisoner barracks no. 1, 6 and 11 that formed the north-eastern frontage of the roll call square were preserved. The barracks no. 5 and 20 were also saved, however, due to their deteriorating technical condition over the years, they have not survived to the present day. The south-eastern frontage of the roll call square was also preserved, including the laundry building (adapted for a chapel in 1949), the camp kitchen, the detention building, the crematorium and the gas chamber.

The first central form of commemorating all the victims of the KL Mauthausen appeared in 1949 on the roll call square. It was a stone sarcophagus with a Latin inscription Mortuorum sorte discant viventes (The fate of the deceased is a lesson for the living). At the beginning of the 1960s, in the area of the destroyed prison blocks, a cemetery was arranged as the final resting place for the remains of prisoners exhumed from the mass graves located in various places in the sub-camps. According to some estimated data, over 14 000 people were buried there. In May 1970, a museum branch was opened in the former prison infirmary, housing an exhibition on the history of the camp.

The Remembrance Park – the Abundancy of Sculptural Installations

In 1949 the process of shaping the remembrance park was commenced and it has been continued until the present. The park space is dedicated to various communities, allowing them to fund individual forms of commemorating victims. The first individual form of that type was a monument established by France. In the course of time, other sculptural installations subsequently appeared. On a gentle slope located between the main gate leading to the former prison premises and the escarpment over the historical quarry, numerous monuments were erected by the following countries: Czechoslovakia (a monument designed by Antonín Nykl; 1959), the USSR (missing data), Luxembourg (missing data), Italy (1955), Albania (missing data), Poland (a monument designed by Stanisław Sikora and Teodor Bursche; 1956), Bulgaria (1975), Greece (missing data), Great Britain (missing data), Belgium (missing data), Spain (missing data), Hungary (missing data), Yugoslavia (a monument designed by Nandor Glid; 1958), the Netherlands (missing data), the German Democratic Republic (a monument designed by Fritz Cremer and Kurt Tausendschön; 1967), the Federal Republic of Germany (a monument designed by Fritz Koenig; 1983) and Slovenia (1995). In the area adjacent to the quarry, a monument was erected to commemorate Jewish victims (missing data), and also Sinti and Roma prisoners murdered in the camp (a monument designed by Mark-

2. The central monument dedicated to the victims of the KL Mauthausen

3. The former prisoner areas

us and Josef Pillhofer; 1998). In 2001 a sculptural installation (designed by Angela Zwettler) was set up to commemorate the youngest victims of the camp. The remembrance park also includes a wall, referred to as the Wailing Wall, on the surface of which numerous commemorative plaques have been installed, founded by dozens of organisations and private parties.

Variety of Tourist Services

In 2003 a Visitor Centre was made accessible to the public. It was built in the area of the former camp workshops. The building was designed by Herwig Mayer, Karl Peyrer-Heimstätt and Christoph Schwarz. The entrance to the building leads through two crevices in a monumental, minimalistic façade made of architectural decorative concrete. The Visitor Centre is situated on the axis perpendicular to the walls, running from one of the middle watchtowers toward the parking lot. Two parallel passageways lead to the network of rooms and atria, well-lit through the skylights. In May 2013, two new exhibitions were opened, along with a room accommodating The Room of Names installation. It provides access to 81 000 surnames of the victims who had lost their lives in the KL Mauthausen.

4. The cemetery

5. A prisoner barrack and the areas where the destroyed barracks used to be located

6. The Wailing Wall

7. The entrance to the crematorium

8. The Visitor Centre

9. The monument dedicated to the children and the youth – the prisoners of the concentration camp

10. The Jewish monument

11. The monument founded by Slovenia

12. The monument founded by Yugoslavia

13. The monument founded by Ukraine

14. The monument founded by Italy

15. The monument founded by Belgium

16. The monuments founded by Spain and Luxembourg

17. The monument founded by Hungary

18. The monument founded by the GDR

19. The monument founded by Bulgaria

20. The monument founded by Albania

21. The monument founded by Poland

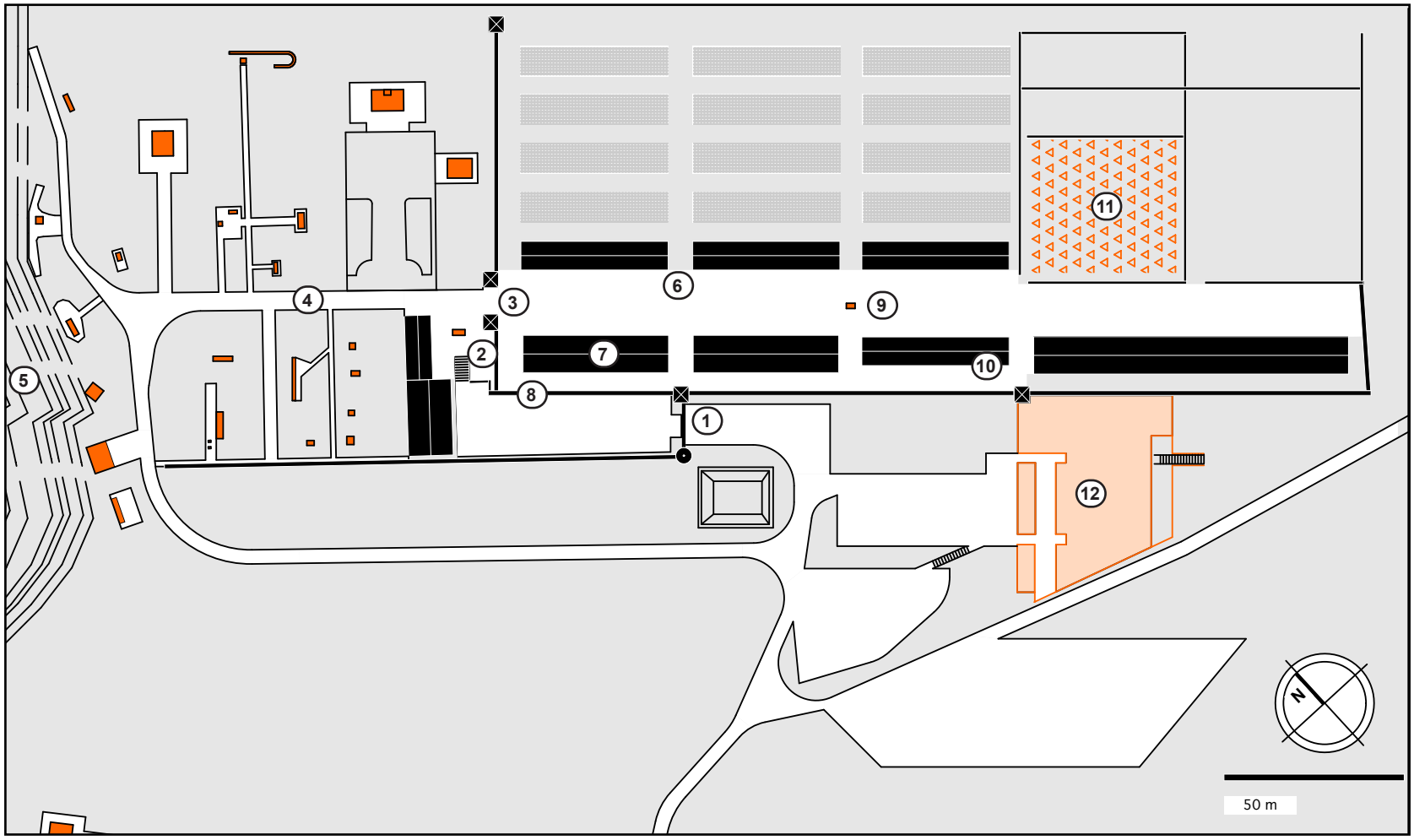
22. The monument founded by Czechoslovakia

23. The monument founded by the USSR

24. The monument founded by France

25. The monument dedicated to the Roma and Sinti victims

26. The monument founded by the Federal Republic of Germany



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Mauthausen

Legend:

1. The main gate
2. The monument to General Karbyshev
3. The gate leading to the prisoner areas
4. The Memorial Park with the monuments founded by various communities
5. The quarry
6. The reconstructed prisoner barracks
7. A barrack adapted for a chapel
8. The Wailing Wall
9. The central monument commemorating the victims of the KL Mauthausen
10. The crematorium and the gas chambers
11. The cemetery
12. The building of the visitor centre

Photographs: Mauthausen, August 2016

Flossenbürg

Konzentrationslager Flossenbürg 1938 - 1945

The KL Flossenbürg was established in May 1938 in the Bavarian region of Weiden, close to the eastern border with Czechoslovakia. The location was approved by Heinrich Himmler and Theodor Eicke, with regard to the economic potential of the region and the quarries that had been operated there for several decades. The main plans were based on the extraction of granite as construction material highly important to the architectural aspirations of the Third Reich. Because of the high availability of granite, the stone watchtowers and the camp walls were of the unique character in comparison to other Nazi concentration camps.

The first groups of prisoners came from the KL Dachau and they were soon joined by prisoners transported from other units. Most of them were people considered by the German authorities as criminals or antisocial individuals. After the outbreak of the war, citizens of Central and Eastern Europe started to be sent to the forced labour camp in Flossenbürg, including Poles imprisoned for conspiratorial endeavours. In 1942 a mass transport of Soviet prisoners of war arrived at the camp. They were located in the barracks situated in the isolated zone where the living conditions were extremely hard. At the turn of 1944-1945, the KL Flossenbürg and its sub-camps had to accommodate Jewish prisoners who had been evacuated *en masse* from the concentration camps based in the east.

Prisoners were forced to work under dreadful conditions, providing labour to the Deutsche Erd-und Steinwerke GmbH, a mining plant under the SS administration. From 1942, the network of sub-camps was expanded to almost a hundred units. Some of them were responsible for the production of equipment required by the armament industry.Backbreaking work, hypothermia, starvation and the system of barbaric punishment – all those factors contributed to the soaring rates of mortality among prisoners. Those considered to be unfit to work were regularly murdered under the *Aktion 14f13* programme. In 1944, due to the increasing number of deaths, the camp authorities decided to build a ramp for rail carts to transport the corpses to the crematorium furnaces located outside the camp walls. It has been recently estimated that almost 100 000 people were imprisoned in the KL Flossenbürg, out of whom about 30 000 died there.

In the spring 1945, the SS garrison members commenced the liquidation of the camp. Several thousand prisoners were forced to take part in death marches to other KL units. On 23rd April, American soldiers entered the camp premises to find approximately 1 500 emaciated prisoners, some of whom died very soon because of diseases and exhaustion. In the area of the former concentration camp, the Americans established a military unit with a prison camp for

1. The symbolic marking of the former gate leading to the prisoner areas

2. The building of the former SS camp administration

3. The ruins of the camp detention building

KZ-Gedenkstätte Flossenbürg
1947 / 1957 / 1995 / 2013-2015

German captives. A year later, under the post-camp infrastructure, a DP camp was organised for Polish displaced persons and it functioned there until 1948.

The Valley of Death – Commemoration in Compliance with Former Prisoners' Will

After the liberation, the buildings of the former KL Flossenbürg were slowly undergoing numerous transformations. The new function of providing temporary accommodation to displaced persons resulted in a decrease in the number of facilities directly related to imprisonment. At the same time, the associations of former prisoners were working on a new formula for the commemoration of the camp tragedy. Initially, their activities included inscriptions on the crematorium chimney, listing the numbers of camp victims and their nationalities. In 1947, a more significant concept for the commemoration site was developed. In May, a Christian Chapel of Jesus Imprisoned was opened. The building was constructed of stone blocks obtained from a demolished watchtower. It was located outside the eastern boundaries of the camp to use the construction of an existing watchtower as its belfry. The chapel was built opposite the remains of the crematorium and in this way a composition axis was defined. In a valley between those two spatial elements, a commemoration site was established - the Valley of Death. It starts outside the camp walls, at the posts of the former entrance gate that had been moved there. The gate had once separated the prison premises and the SS administration area. The area of the Valley of Death included the former execution place that was symbolically marked with a low wall and a triangle incorporated inside. Behind this place, on the axis leading to the chapel, a pyramid was piled up to protect the ashes of the victims. Further on, the Square of the Nations was arranged – a place where plaques with inscriptions referring to the nationalities of the victims were installed.

Adaptation of the Post-camp Buildings to the Current Needs

In 1949, after the liquidation of the DP camp, the Bavarian authorities covered the chapel and the Valley of Death with legal protection. Since then, the Valley of Death has been often referred to as the Valley of Peace. The wooden prisoner barracks were demolished and the solid stone buildings of the SS garrison headquarters and administration accommodation were used by private enterprises. The same happened to the former camp bath and kitchen – those buildings were operated by an industrial plant that used the area of the former roll call square to build its warehouses. The decision on the fate of the main areas of the former concentration camp was made in the mid-

4. The Christian Chapel of Jesus Imprisoned

1950s, when a residential estate of detached houses was developed in the area of the northern terraces, where the prisoner barracks used to be located. Simultaneously, some international (mainly French) associations of combatants started making demands for a proper burial for the remains of those who had died along the routes of death marches. In the years 1957-1960, the Bavarian authorities exhumed the remains of prisoners who had lost their lives along the routes of death marches. In the eastern part of the post-camp area, at the place of the former disinfection facility next to the Valley of Death, a symbolic cemetery was established. During the implementation of this project, some parts of the site, which had been established a decade before, were rearranged to form a uniform landscape composition. The garden composition incorporates granite crosses and Jewish tombstones referring to the symbolism of Christian and Jewish cemeteries. Over the years, the area of the former camp was divided into three sectors performing various functions: to the north there was a housing estate, to the west – an industrial plant was operating and to the east a commemorative park site was established. In 1964 the demolition of the former detention building was started; however, due to numerous social protests the building was eventually preserved in the form of the partial ruins.

New Contexts of Commemoration

In 1995, upon the initiative of the Bavarian Jewish community, the Jewish Commemoration Monument was erected. It was designed by the Kunnert & Würschinger architectural studio as a simple, white building constructed on a rectangular plan, divided into a hallway and the main hall, lit by a skylight installed into a dome formed on the basis of a hexagonal pyramid. The building houses plaques with over 300 surnames of Jewish prisoners who have so far been identified as the victims of the KL Flossenbürg. The inside of the building is lined with granite extracted from the former camp quarry. The minimalistic interior design is accentuated by two inscriptions: a quotation from the Book of Psalms (130,1) From the depths I call to you, Lord and a Hebrew word רוכז (to remember). In 1997, the former roll call square and the buildings of the former laundry and the camp kitchen were passed under the care of the institution responsible for the commemoration site. The industrial warehouses were eventually demolished. A decade later, in the renovated laundry building, a permanent exhibition was made accessible to the public under the title The Flossenbürg Concentration Camp 1938–1945. In 2010, another exhibition was opened in the building of the former camp kitchen to present the post-war time period – *What remains. The Aftermath of the Flossenbürg Concentration Camp*.

Revitalisation of the Landscape

In the years 2013-2015, the landscape revitalisation was carried out in the former concentration camp area that had been successfully reclaimed from the private owners. The Sinai Gesellschaft von Landschaftsarchitekten mbH studio developed a design that was aimed at the visualisation of the historical topography of the site. The most important elements of the post-camp area that were accentuated included the following: the monumental building of the commandant's headquarters, the passageway from the SS administration premises to the guarded prison premises that was symbolically marked with concrete posts, models of the historical and contemporary camp areas, the concrete frames used for the marking of the foundation outlines of the demolished prisoner barracks, exhibitions arranged in the buildings of the former camp kitchen and laundry and modernisation of the former SS casino building that was adapted to perform auxiliary functions to the commemoration site, such as seminar rooms and a restaurant. The remains of the former fortifications included two eastern stone watchtowers.

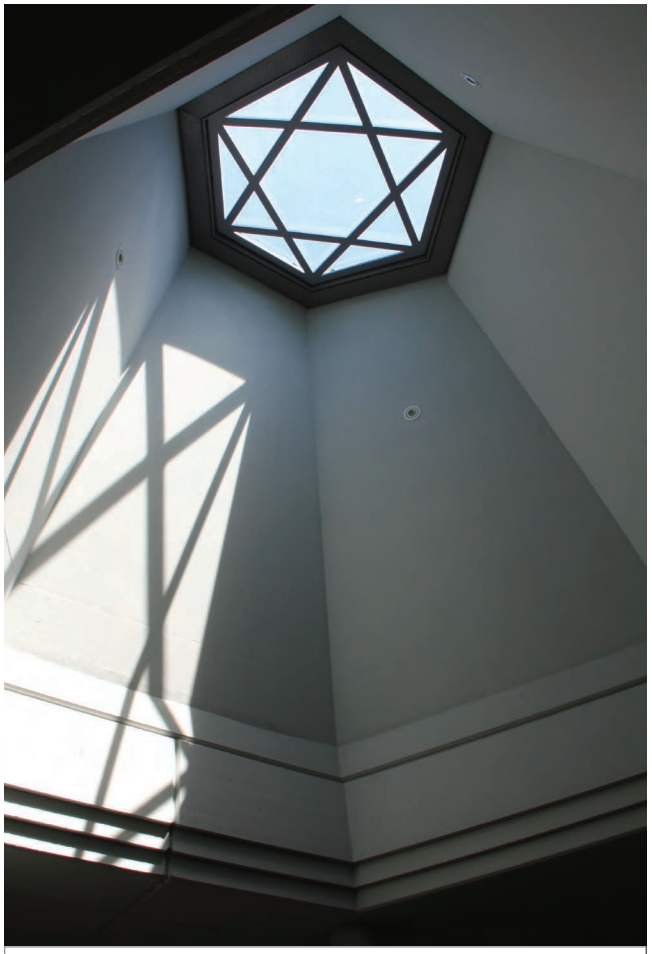
5. The Valley of Death

6. The Valley of Death – a pyramid of ashes collected in the crematorium

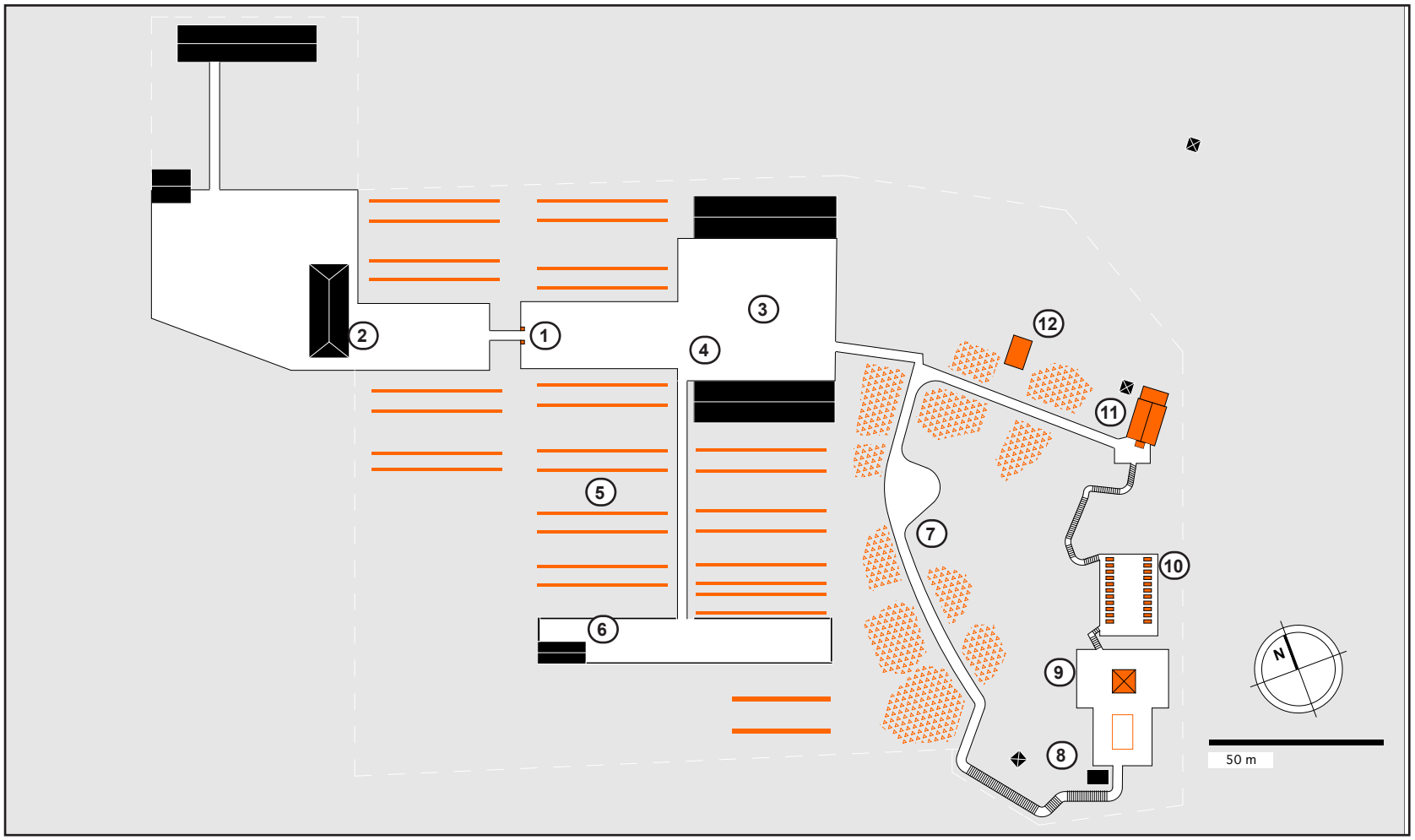
7. The cemetery

8. The cemetery

9. The building at the site commemorating Jewish prisoners



10. The inside of the Jewish Commemoration Monument



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Flossenbürg

Legend:

1. The symbolic marking of the former gate leading to the prisoner areas
2. The former SS administration of the camp
3. The roll call square
4. The building of the former camp laundry/camp bath
5. The symbolic marking of the former location of the prisoner barracks
6. The ruins of the former camp detention
7. The cemetery with the mass graves
8. The crematorium
9. The Valley of Death
10. The Square of the Nations
11. The Christian Chapel of Jesus Imprisoned
12. The Jewish Commemoration Monument

Photographs: Flossenbürg, July 2011

Stutthof

Konzentrationslager Stutthof 1939 - 1945

In the forests surrounding Sztutowo, a village located in the area of Żuławy Wiślane (the Vistula Fens), the SS unit from Gdańsk arranged training facilities in 1938. Upon the invasion against Poland, the Germans started their *Intelligenzaktion* operation that involved extermination of Polish intelligentsia in the region. Over 30 000 people were killed as a result of mass executions carried out by German special operational groups of security police and security service. The victims were mainly representatives of political, economic and intellectual elites. The survivors of the ethnic cleansing were imprisoned in a camp that was established on a forest clearing near Sztutowo. A relatively small camp area of 0.5 ha was expanded up to 120 ha within several years. In January 1942, Stutthof obtained a status of a state concentration camp. Initially, the groups of prisoners consisted of inhabitants of the Gdańsk Pomerania region. Later on, prisoners were also transported from Scandinavia, Lithuania and Latvia; a half of the total number of people imprisoned in the camp were Jews from various European countries.

The living and sanitary conditions in the camp were extremely hard. The coastal climate might have also negatively affected prisoners' health. Until the moment of granting the camp with the status of the KL unit, it had been based upon some makeshift infrastructure and buildings that were later on modernised in accordance with the guidelines sent by the Concentration Camp Inspectorate. The improvements were aimed at the development of a network of sub-camps to provide support to the armament industry related to shipyard production.

In the years 1942-1943, the first part of the New Camp was constructed. However, two years later the camp was again overcrowded, due to the mass transports of prisoners from other camps. In mid-1944, the garrison of the camp initiated operation of the gas chamber. The victims of mass executions were mainly Jewish women who were unfit to provide slave labour to German armament industry. It is also supposed that almost 100 Soviet prisoners of war died in the gas chamber too. In 1945, the garrison of the camp organised two rounds of evacuation, transporting prisoners to other German camps located to the west. The first evacuation tour took place in winter, by land. Prisoners were forced to exhausting marches. In the spring, prisoners were transported by sea. Due to arduous conditions, the mortality rates among prisoners were very high during both evacuation tours.

Within over five years of the KL Stutthof operation, there were approximately 110 000 prisoners registered at the camp. According to the approximate data, about 65 000 people were killed there, out of whom 28 000 were of Jewish origin. On 9th May 1945, in the morning, the Red Army entered the premises of the KL Stutthof, finding partially abandoned infrastructure.

1. The main gate leading to the former prisoner areas

2. The historical building of the former SS camp administration – the Museum

Muzeum Stutthof
1962 / 1968 / 2016

Gradual Devastation of the Original Post-camp Architecture

The Soviet army was based in Sztutowo until the winter 1945. At that time, the commander of the 48th Army of the 2nd Belorussian Front appointed the Extraordinary Commission for the Investigation of Crimes Committed at the KL Stutthof. Local German inhabitants were forced by the soldiers to carry out tidying work in the post-camp areas. Later on, most of the post-camp infrastructure was left unsecured and unattended, hence it was gradually deteriorated and looted. In 1949, the area of the Old Camp was entered into the Register of Historical Monuments. In the 1950s the Ministry of Public Security decided to transform the building of the former camp administration into a resort hotel.

The Museum

At the beginning of the 1960s, due to the efforts undertaken by some former camp prisoners, some steps were made to secure the area of the former KL unit, to commence scientific and education activities and to establish a permanent commemoration site there. By the resolution of 12th March 1962 adopted by the Presidium of the Provincial National Council of Gdańsk, the Stutthof Museum was established. Initially, the area of the museum covered 12 ha where the most important relics were preserved: the crematorium furnaces, the gas chamber, four wooden barracks, the Gate of Death, some fragments of fences with two watchtowers, the guardhouse and the building of the former camp administration. Gradually, the spatial range of the commemoration site was increased to 23 ha, which was about 20% of the area covered by the KL Stutthof in the past.

Monumental Commemoration

The task of designing a commemoration form for the site was entrusted to Wiktor Tołkin, a sculptor. A monumental sculptural installation dominating over the area of the former camp was opened for the public in 1968. Referred to as the Forum of the Nations, an elevated square became the location of a monumental concrete sculpture consisting of two components: a vertical element in the form of a massive column and a horizontal wall inside which a niche was made. In the niche, behind a glass panel a symbolic reliquary holding the ashes collected from the crematorium furnaces was set. The horizontal block was decorated with a bas-relief depicting the numbers that were used for the prisoner marking system applied in the camp. Resembling a ram, the sculpture metaphorically crosses the fence of the barbed wire that was reduced at that place. The surfaces of those two elements were covered with expressive bas-reliefs depicting human figures. The artist also incorporated the fragments of Franciszek Fenikowski's poetry into the reliefs: *let our voice call/from this to another generation/for memory, our shadows plead, not retaliation!/Our*

3. A prisoner barrack

4. The remains of the foundations of the barracks in the Old Camp

fate is you warning – not a legend or dream. Should man grow silent/the very stones will scream[1]. At the junction of two elements an inscription was engraved: *here people/were burnt/this fate/was prepared/for the nations/by the Nazis/ in madness/and hatred/2nd September 1939 - 9th May 1945*.

The historical layout of the demolished barracks in the Old Camp was defined by filling the remaining base foundations with gravel. In the axis of the former camp administration headquarters, the gas chamber was reconstructed, next to an object protecting the surviving crematorium furnaces that was reconstructed after the war. In 1946, a wooden cross was erected in the vicinity of the crematorium that was joined by the Star of David in the 1980s. Today, the empty areas of the New Camp and the Jewish Camp have been marked with symbolic white blocks with the numbers referring to the historical layout of the entire camp.

Adaptation of the Surviving Infrastructure to the Requirements of the New Exhibition Space

In 2016, the museum organised revitalisation of the historical greenhouses set up in 1943. The solid, well-preserved construction was built due to the camp commandant, Paul W. Hoppe's interest in gardening. It provided new exhibition space for artwork created by the former prisoners of the KL Stutthof during the operation of the camp and after its liberation.

[1]translation after culture.pl/en/article/the-architecture-of-places-of-memory

5. Prisoner numbers as the elements of the sculptural details

6. The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom

7. The bas-relief on the horizontal part of the monument

8. The symbolic overhanging of the horizontal part of the monument

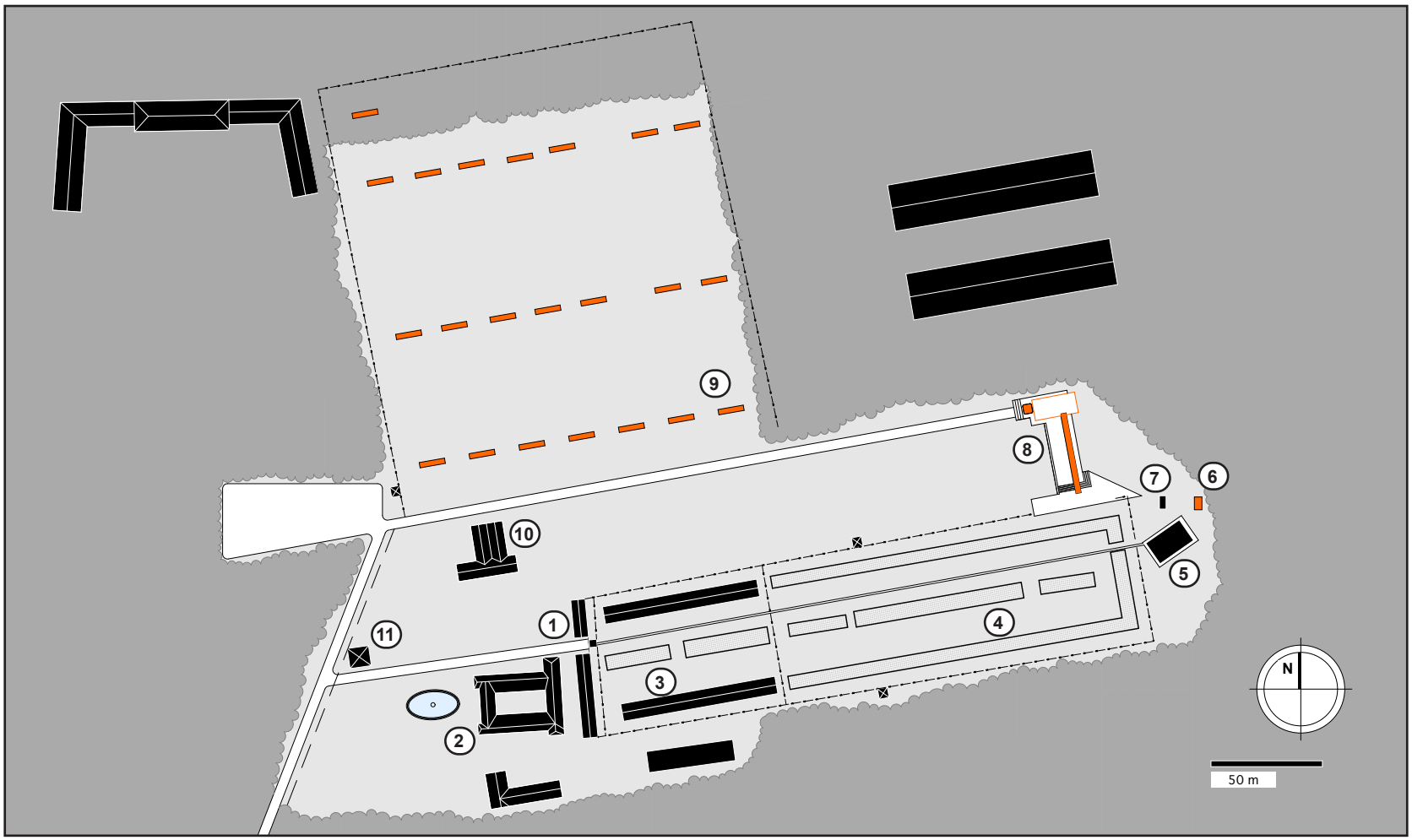
9. The area of the Old Camp

10. The gas chambers and the crematorium

11. The exhibition rooms in the revitalised greenhouses

12. The gas chambers

13. The reconstructed system of the camp fences



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Stutthof

Legend:

1. The main gate leading to the former prisoner areas
2. The building of the former SS camp administration
3. The prisoner barracks accommodating the museum exhibition
4. The remains of the foundations of the barracks in the Old Camp
5. The crematorium
6. A historical railway car
7. The gas chamber
8. The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom
9. The area of the New Camp
10. The exhibition in the revitalised greenhouses
11. The visitor centre office in the former SS guardhouse

Photographs: Sztutowo, June 2016

Auschwitz I

Konzentrationslager Auschwitz I

1940 - 1945

In contemporary culture, the KL Auschwitz is an icon of terror imposed by Nazi Germany on European civilians during the Second World War – a physical sign of atrocities committed in the times of modern civilisation. The KL Auschwitz was the largest Nazi concentration camp and the main centre constructed for immediate extermination of Jews. It was equipped with the extended infrastructure to meet the requirements of that purpose. At least 1.1 million people were murdered in the camp, 1 million out of whom were Jews, about 70 000 – 75 000 were prisoners of the Polish nationality, over 21 000 were Roma people, 14 000 were Soviet prisoners of war and over 10 000 were people representing other nationalities. After the war, thousands of survivors struggled hard to cope with the post-camp trauma. The data on the numbers of victims who lost their lives in the KL Auschwitz are still being verified, due to the fact that scientific research studies concerning the fate of prisoners have not been finished yet.

The camp was established by the Nazis in the middle of 1940, in the outskirts of Oświęcim, a small town located in Lesser Poland, incorporated by the Germans into the territory of the Third Reich in October 1939. Gradually expanding, the spatial and organisational structure was initially functioning as a concentration camp, where political prisoners formed the largest group, similarly to other camps that had been established since the 1930s in the German territory. In the summer 1944, the main structure comprised three sub-camps, namely: Auschwitz I – the main camp in Oświęcim, Auschwitz II-Birkenau (from 1941), Auschwitz III-Monowitz (1942–1944) and over 40 sub-camps located in their vicinity.

At the beginning of 1942, the German garrison implemented the principles for the operation of the immediate extermination centre for Jewish prisoners. Almost 1 million Jewish adults and children transported from various European countries were murdered in gas chambers and their bodies were burnt in the crematoria.

In October 1944, the liquidation of the camp was started. Prisoners were gradually evacuated and the camp facilities were demolished. Starting on 20th January 1945, the garrison members hurriedly destroyed the camp documentation and they blew up the gas chambers and the crematoria. A week later the camp was liberated by the Red Army soldiers.

Auschwitz I – the main camp (in German: *Stammlager*) in Oświęcim was established in 1940, several months after the German aggression against Poland, in the pre-war buildings of the Polish military barracks. Initially, it operated as a forced labour camp, where about a dozen thousand prisoners were incarcerated at the same time. Among other camp facilities, Block 10 was set to carry out criminal medical experiments on prisoners. There was also Block 11, where prisoners who had violated the camp regulations were sent. The buildings were situated near the Wall of Death, where several thousand prisoners were shot. In the years 1941-1942, extermination was carried out also in the gas chambers located in the camp premises. The brick buildings accommodated the SS administration headquarters (SS Standortverwaltung), and the headquarters of the commander of the SS garrison and of the commandant of the KL Auschwitz I. The buildings and the camp facilities were surrounded by the lines of guards and almost 40 km^2 of uninhabited wasteland (in German: *Interessengebiet*).

1. In front of the main gate leading to the areas of the former KL Auschwitz I

Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau 1947

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

In 1947, upon the initiative of the former prisoners, the Polish government established by law the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim. The commemoration site and the museum are located in the post-camp area that is covered with legal protection. The places made accessible to the public are situated in the areas of Auschwitz I (the main camp) and Auschwitz II-Birkenau.

Maintaining the Original Landscape of the Genocide Scene

Largely preserved, the buildings of Auschwitz I function in contemporary culture as a well-recognised symbol of atrocities committed by the Nazi regime. Hung over the main entrance gate, an original slogan *Arbeit macht frei* incorporated in its metalwork has already become a globally recognised symbol of the Nazi concentration camps. The area of approximately 20 ha accommodates the museum, where the post-camp infrastructure is maintained on an on-going basis. The infrastructure comprises the camp blocks, a reconstructed gas chamber and a crematorium, the remains of the camp fence and internal roads. Since the very beginning, the museum has been pursuing the policy of preserving the historical authenticity of the site. In 1979 the former KL Auschwitz, as the only former Nazi concentration camp, was included into the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Historical Exhibitions

The first exhibition on the history of the camp was opened at the beginning of the museum operation. It was arranged in the prison blocks. In the course of time, new exhibitions have been added. The most poignant exhibition is entitled *Evidence of Crime* and it presents personal items stolen from people transported to the camp: suitcases, shoes, hairbrushes, glasses and hair cut from people murdered in the gas chambers.

Starting in the 1960s, the national exhibitions were successively opened in the museum premises. These included exhibitions related to the history of prisoners who were transported to the camp from the particular European countries. The first group of national exhibitions referred to the following countries: Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Russia, Germany, Yugoslavia, Belgium and Denmark. In the 1970s, the national exhibitions were expanded with the references to Bulgaria, Austria and France and in the 1980s – the Netherlands, Italy and Poland. In 2013, the Shoah exhibition was opened to the public. The organisations from the particular countries were responsible for the preparation of their exhibitions in terms of their substantive and aesthetical aspects.

2. The internal road leading from the main gate

3. The space between the prisoner blocks

A visit to the museum that has been arranged within the structures of the KL Auschwitz I usually precedes visiting the International Monument to the Victims of the Camp that is located in the premises of the former KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau.

The area of the museum complex incorporates the sites of the Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau that have partially survived until the present day. They include 155 prisoner barracks and other post-camp facilities, 300 ruins, including four gas chambers and crematoria. The legal protection also covers over 13 km of the fence constructed of concrete posts and barbed wire.

4. The internal road between the prisoner blocks

5. Crematorium I

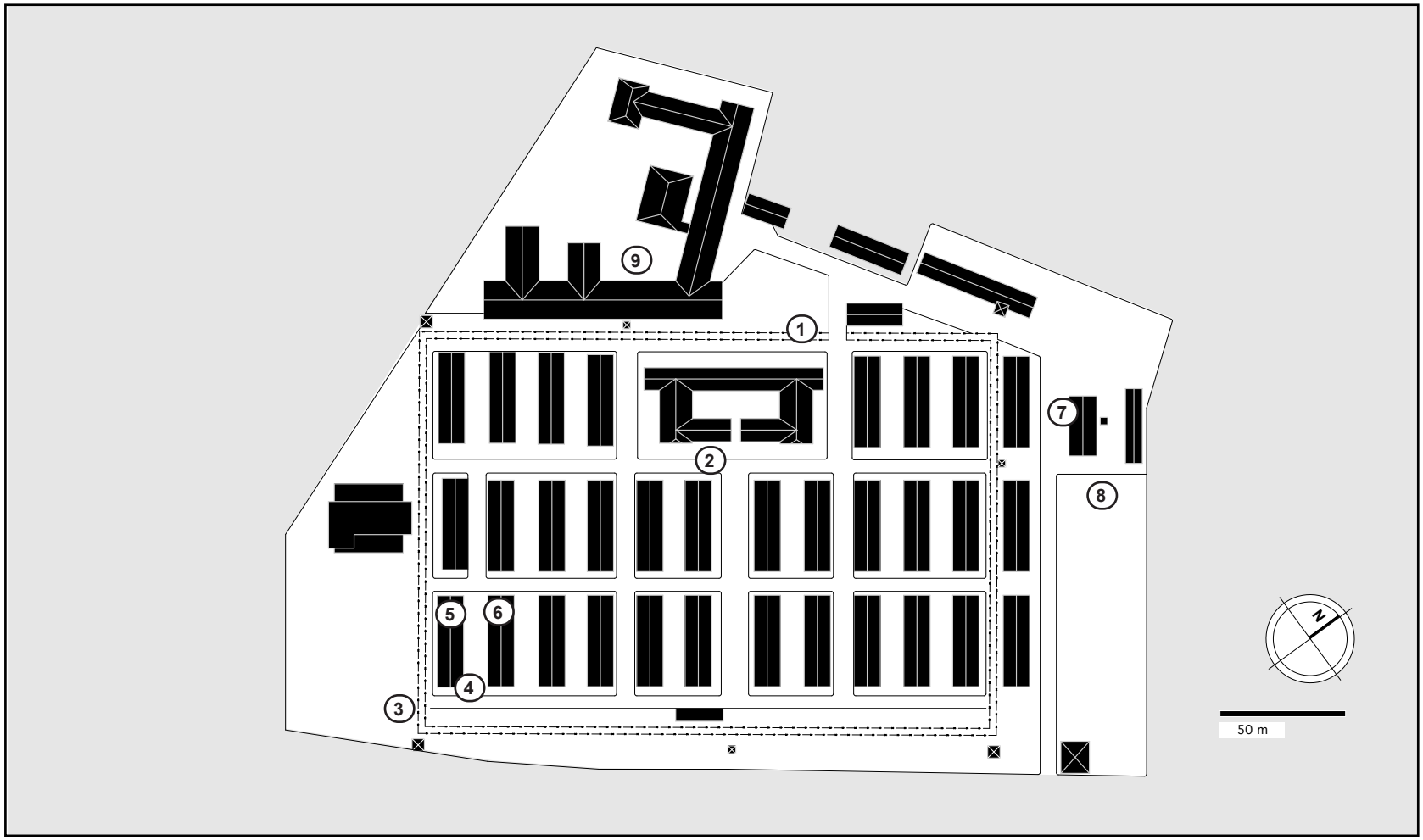
6. The system of the camp fences

7. A watchtower

8. A shelter booth for an SS soldier who used to supervise the roll calls in the roll call square

9. The historical roll call square

10. The gallows at the roll call square



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Auschwitz I

Legend:

1. The main gate with the *Arbeit macht frei* inscription
2. The roll call square
3. The system of the camp fences
4. The execution wall
5. Block no. 11
6. Block no. 10
7. Crematorium I
8. The gallows
9. The visitor centre

Photographs: Oświęcim, February 2008

Auschwitz-Birkenau

Konzentrationslager Auschwitz II - Birkenau

1940 - 1945

The KL Auschwitz II-Birkenau was the largest camp area in the entire KL Auschwitz complex. It was established in 1941 in Brzezinka, as a sub-camp of the main unit in Oświęcim. Several months later is was transformed into a unit participating in the process of mass extermination carried out under the framework of the "final solution to the Jewish question" (in German *Endlösung der Judenfrage*). After the construction of gas chambers and crematorium furnaces for burning corpses, the infrastructure started to function as the largest immediate extermination camp ever established by the German Nazis. The vast majority of Jewish prisoners transported to the KL Auschwitz, almost 1 million people, lost their lives in Birkenau.

The camp facilities included about 300 buildings situated in a rectangular area of approximately 140 ha, protected by an electrified barbed wire fence and watchtowers. Connected by mutual organisational interdependency, the concentration camp units cooperated with the unit of the immediate extermination. Living in inhumane, dreadful conditions, prisoners who were used for slave labour or pseudo-medical experiments were kept in one part of the KL complex, whereas in the other part, European Jews, who had arrived in mass transports to the camp, were preliminarily selected and sent straight to the gas chambers. Under the standard procedure, prisoners of the KL Auschwitz were tattooed with identification numbers.

In the summer 1944, the garrison of the KL Auschwitz started gradual evacuation of prisoners to other concentration camps based in the central territory of the Third Reich. The camp documents were successively destroyed and the facilities used for immediate mass extermination were dismantled. At the beginning of 1945, the last death marches were dispatched. On 27th January, the Red Army soldiers entered the premises of the KL Auschwitz, liberating almost 7 500 prisoners. In April 1947, based on the decision of the Polish Supreme National Tribunal, the commandant of the camp in the years 1940 - 1943, Rudolf Höß was hanged.

1. The railway ramp with the main gate leading to the area of the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau in the background

2. The prisoner barracks

Legal protection of the Ruins of the Former KL Unit

Two years after the liberation of the former camp, its premises were covered with legal protection. The surviving facilities were maintained on an on-going basis and partially reconstructed. The area of the KL Birkenau was selected as the location for the central monument commemorating the victims of the KL Auschwitz. In 1955, an urn with the soil collected at other concentration camps was set there.

Międzynarodowy Pomnik Ofiar Faszyzmu

1967

Searching for a Visual Form of Remembrance

A decade after the end of the war, Europe was still struggling against the dilemma how to commemorate the Holocaust and heal other wounds inflicted on its inhabitants. In an attempt at finding an adequate commemoration formula, a competition was announced in 1957 by the International Auschwitz Committee for an architectural and sculptural design of an International Monument to the Victims of Fascism. The main guidelines set by the jury chaired by Henry Moore, a famous sculptor, stated that the entire post-camp area was to be used as a large-scale monumental site. Submitted to the competition (over 400 designs sent from several dozen countries), the design projects, the public discourse and the controversies around those designs became a mile stone in commemorative art. The design projects submitted to the competition provided a possibility to redefine the current formula of a monument.

During the first stage of the competition, the jury selected three concepts and invited their authors (two Italian teams and a Polish team) to the next stage to develop their designs. Finally, the design developed by a team led by Oskar Hansen, a Polish architect, won the competition. The winning idea was called by its designers a Road Monument. It assumed active participation of visitors to the camp in the process of commemoration. Across the surface of the rectangular urban layout of the former camp, a road was designed. Its asphalt surface was to preserve the post-camp infrastructure beneath. The remaining area was to be left to the influence of the natural environment and the flow of time. The architecture of the monument did not assume any accentuation points. There were not any initial and final elements in it either. However, the abstract approach toward the commemoration was strongly opposed by some former prisoners. Hence, as a compromise, the jury asked the teams distinguished in the final stage of the competition to develop a joint design. In 1960, it was ultimately decided that the design for the implementation would be the concept developed by Pietro Cascella, Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, Julian Pałka, Giorgio Simoncini, Tommaso Valle and Maurizio Vitale. The monument was unveiled during a solemn ceremony on 16th April 1967.

The International Monument to the Victims of Fascism

Forever let this place be a cry of despair and a warning to humanity where the Nazis murdered about one and a half million men, women and children, mainly Jews, from various countries of Europe - these words have been engraved in 20 languages on the stone slabs of the central monument situated on a platform consisting of several steps. Composed of several thousand granite cubes, the large-scale plate covers the surface with the remains of the entrance gates and

3. A watchtower

4. The prisoner barracks – section BIb

fences, in the close vicinity of the ruins of the gas chambers and crematoria. The main elements of the composition are blocks resembling stone sarcophagi. Above the block, a vertical accentuation dominates, following the shapes of the crematorium chimneys. The entire composition is placed against the background formed of a row of poplar trees that were planted during the time when the camp was in operation to mask the sites of mass extermination.

The road leading to the monument starts right at the main gate that is referred to as the Gate of Death and it runs along the historical railway ramp. This is the route which was followed by prisoners who came on foot and later were transported in cattle wagons to find death in the gas chambers. Today visitors follow that route, passing the remains of the former infrastructure, partially reconstructed prisoner barracks of the BIa section, the ruins with chimneys, watchtowers and barbed wire fences. In the entire site, the care for preservation of the original structure formally outweighs the artistic artefacts added in the 1960s.

New Space for Historical Exhibitions

In 2001 a new exhibition was opened to visitors. It was arranged in the building of the main sauna, where the camp garrison members registered deported people as prisoners of the concentration camp. Then, thousands of people were forced to cut their hair, undergo segregation, disinfect their clothes and be tattooed with the prisoner numbers.

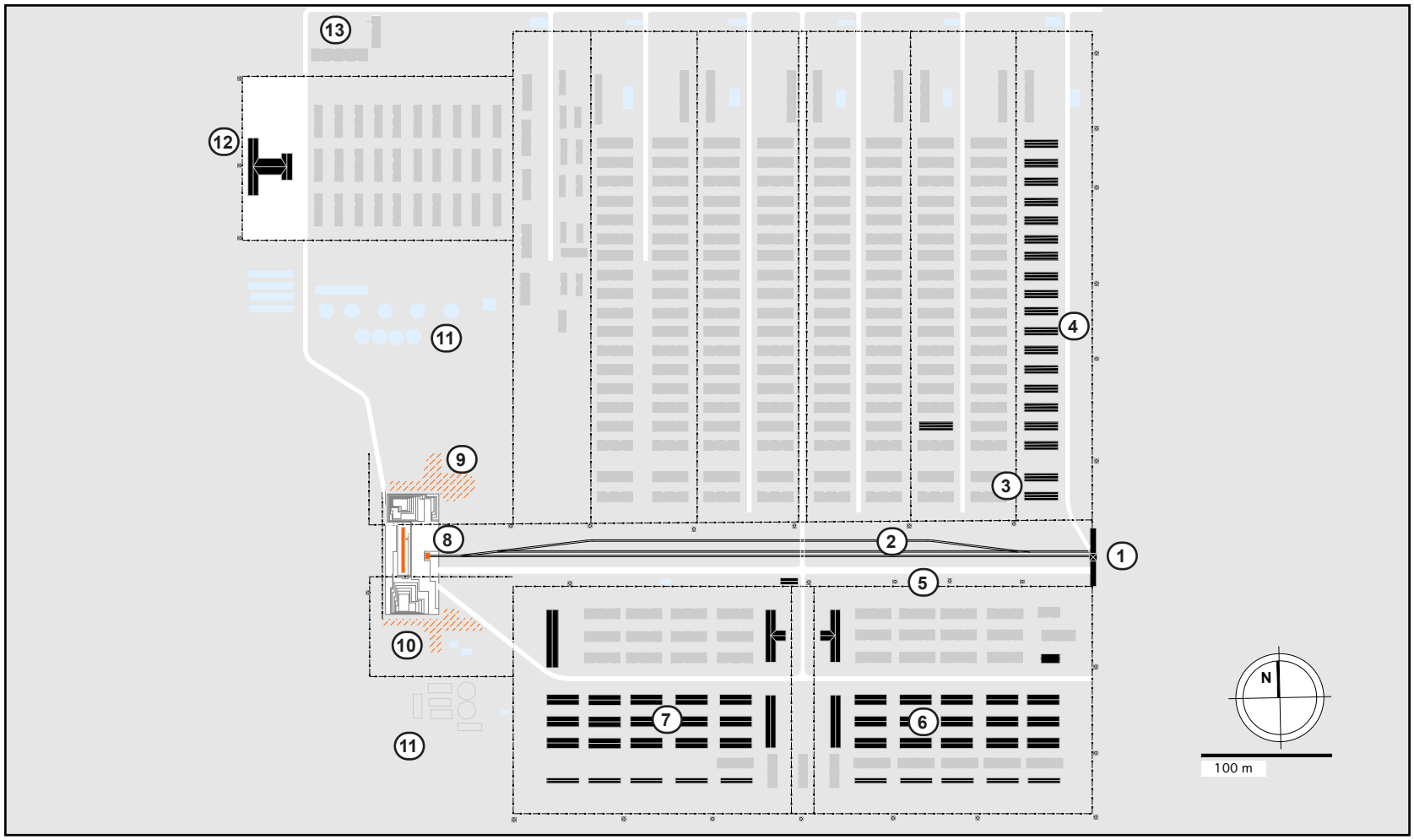
5. The central point of the monument

6. A remaining fragment of the camp fence embedded in a slab of the square in front of the monument

7. The former gate between the separated sections of the camp

8. Rampa kolejowa z pomnikiem w tle

9. The ruins of the gas chamber and the crematorium



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau

Legend:

1. The main gate leading to the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau
2. The railway ramp in the camp
3. The barracks with the camp toilets/latrines
4. The wooden prisoner barracks – section BIIa
5. The camp fence with the watchtowers
6. The prisoner barracks - Block BIa
7. The prisoner barracks – Block BIb
8. The monument
9. The ruins of the gas chamber and Crematorium III
10. The ruins of the gas chamber and Crematorium II
11. A sewage treatment plant
12. The main camp bath/the Sauna
13. The ruins of the gas chamber and Crematorium IV

Photographs: Oświęcim, February 2008

Groß-Rosen

Konzentrationslager Groß-Rosen 1940 - 1945

In summer 1940 in the former German province of Niederschlesien (Lower Silesia), near the city of Breslau (now Wrocław), another sub-camp of the KL Sachsenhausen was established. The location was selected due to the granite deposits found in that area and the convenient vicinity of the conquered Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the General Governorate. During the first year of its operation, the forced labour camp achieved the results impressive enough to draw Himmler's attention. Upon his order, on 1st May 1941, the KL unit acquired the status of the state concentration camp. Prisoners were used for slave labour at the quarries to extract granite and to work at plants supporting German industry. Back-breaking work, terror inflicted by the camp garrison members and starvation resulted in high mortality rates among prisoners. The KL Groß-Rosen was considered as one of the toughest forced labour camps organised by the Third Reich. In the subsequent years, new sub-camps were set up in that area and in 1944 their network consisted of almost one hundred units. At the end of its operation, the main camp was overcrowded with prisoners evacuated from the camps in the east. The existing infrastructure was especially extended for the groups of prisoners transported from Auschwitz.

Presumably, about 125 000 prisoners were incarcerated in the camp. The largest groups in terms of prisoners' nationalities consisted of Jewish and Polish people. In 1941 the camp had to accommodate a group of 2 500 Soviet prisoners of war. Most of them were murdered during the next several months. In the autumn 1943, a correctional labour camp started its operation in the KL Groß-Rosen. The Gestapo sent there young delinquents for various offences. It has been estimated that over 4 000 young people were imprisoned there, mainly the citizens of nearby Breslau.

The estimated number of the deceased given by contemporary scientists who specialise in the history of the camp is 40 000. A tragic stage in the history of the KL Groß-Rosen was the evacuation of prisoners that started at the beginning of February 1945 by the German garrison members due to the approach of the Red Army. The abandoned camp was liberated by Soviet soldiers on 14th February 1945. The NKVD used the facilities of the concentration camp as a black site prison for two years.

The Mausoleum Monument

In March 1947, the post-camp areas were passed under the Polish administration. In the same year, some former prisoners established the Groß-Rosen Protection Committee. Soon after that, a competition was announced for a design of a commemoration site to honour the victims of the camp. In 1953 a mausoleum monument was unveiled. It was de-

1. The main gate leading to the former prisoner areas

2. A sculpture on the square in front of the main gate

Państwowe Muzeum Gross-Rosen
1953 / 1958 / 1983 / 2010

signed by Adam Procki in a form of a heavy-set obelisk. At its base, the ashes collected in the crematorium were buried. Used for the construction of the obelisk, the granite came from the remains of the material extracted by prisoners from the quarry. In 1985 the main body of the monument was extended by two wings of the granite walls, in which the soil collected from the sub-camps of the KL Groß-Rosen was rested.

There are very few elements of the historical architecture preserved in the area of the former camp. The exception is the main entrance gate with the Arbeit macht frei inscription painted over the main passageway. In 1958 the first museum exhibition was placed there. In the years 1978 – 1982, a pavilion was constructed on the foundations of the former SS casino to house the museum exhibition rooms. During the 1950s, the substantive care over the post-camp area became the responsibility of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and later the Historical Museum of Wrocław. In 1983 the Gross Rosen State Museum in Rogoźnica was established.

Partial Reconstruction of the Historical Buildings

Due to the terraced shape of the slope on which the camp was organised, some buildings were constructed with the basements that have survived to the present and they successively undergo maintenance work. After the comprehensive conservation work, some parts of the basement under the prisoner barrack no. 9/10, referred to as the French barrack, have been made accessible to the public. Visitors can also see the basements under the camp bath, prison kitchen and the ruins of the crematorium. In 2010, under the framework of the conservation and construction project, the existing foundations were used for the reconstruction of the prisoner barrack no. 7 and a watchtower. The basic spatial layout of the camp was visualised with the use of the concrete frames and stone slabs to mark the outlines of the barracks.

Commemoration of the Forced Labour Camp

The most dreadful place related to the history of the camp had been inaccessible to visitors for a very long time. Located next to the camp, the quarry was still exploited by a private company after the war. Due to the protests expressed by some former prisoners and with the support of a foreign foundation, in 2005 the Museum bought the historical quarry and prepared its premises for visitors. It was also planned to implement a monumental site at the place where prisoners had been forced to backbreaking slave labour. The Nizio Design International studio has recently developed a concept for the architectural setting of the quarry. It assumes construction of a road lead-

3. The Mausoleum Monument

ing down to the former camp area through the post-war section of the quarry to the lowest accessible part of the historical extraction place. The design of the Stone Hell is now at the stage of fund raising for its implementation.

4. The ruins of the barrack cellars

5. A view to the camp gate from the road leading to the quarry

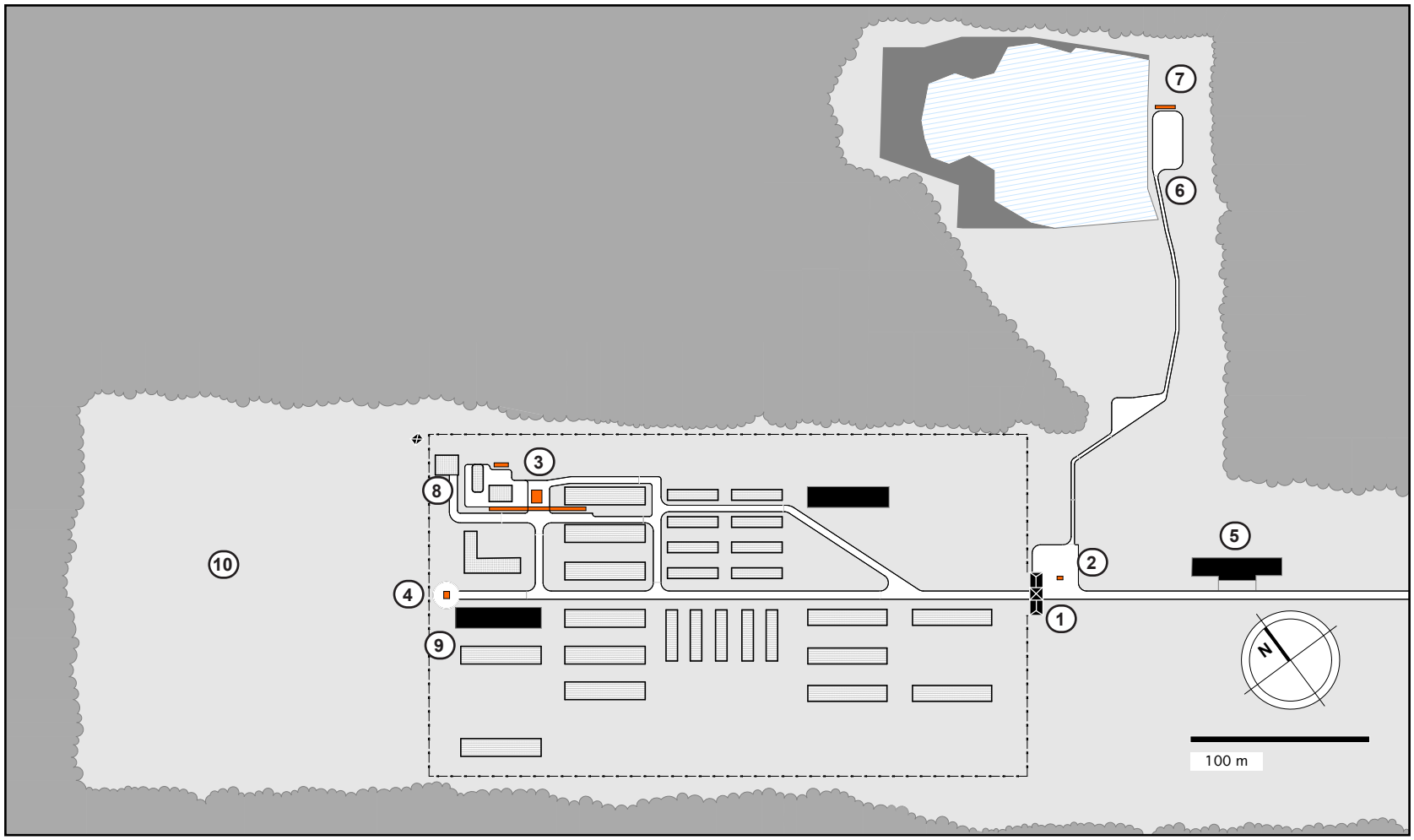
6. The symbolic marking of the former location of the barracks

7. The historical quarry where prisoners were forced to work

8. A commemoration plaque at the quarry

9. The road to the quarry

10. The historical mine infrastructure next to the quarry



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Gross-Rosen

Legend:

1. The main gate leading to the former prisoner areas
2. A sculpture on the square in front of the main gate
3. The Mausoleum Monument
4. The Cross Monument
5. The building of the former SS casino now accommodating the museum exhibition
6. The area of the historical quarry
7. The historical hoisting crane-towers next to the quarry
8. The ruins of the crematorium
9. A reconstructed prisoner barrack
10. The Auschwitz part of the camp

Photographs: Rogoźnica, January 2009

Bergen-Belsen

Konzentrationslager Bergen-Belsen 1940 - 1945

In the first half of 1940, a *Stalag* – a camp for prisoners of war was established in the vicinity of a German town Bergen. Initially, it accommodated several hundred French and Belgian soldiers but in the summer 1941 20 000 Soviet prisoners of war were transported to the camp. Due to the lack of the facilities and infrastructure, they were kept outdoors, with no shelter at all. During the winter months 14 000 prisoners died because of hypothermia and starvation. In spring 1943 a stay camp was established in Bergen-Belsen (in German: *Aufenthaltslager*), giving a start to the internment of several thousand Jews, who were citizens of neutral countries. It was planned to use them in diplomatic actions and to exchange them for German citizens imprisoned in the Allied territories.

At the end of 1944, when Josef Kramer was appointed the commandant of the camp after his relocation from the KL Auschwitz, the living conditions in the KL Bergen Belsen were drastically deteriorated and the site was eventually transformed into a concentration camp. Soon, the KL Bergen Belsen became an important destination to death marches. Hundreds of prisoners were evacuated here from the camps located in the eastern regions as a result of the advancing offensive operations of the Allied armies. The overcrowding caused by the incoming mass transports of prisoners, insufficient sanitary facilities and starvation contributed to the soaring mortality rates among prisoners at the beginning of 1945.

On 15th April the camp was liberated by the British Army. In the entire area of the camp, the epidemics of various contagious diseases, such as typhus and typhoid fever, had been already widespread and almost beyond any control. Out of 60 000 prisoners incarcerated in the camp at that time, about a dozen thousand people died, despite desperate efforts undertaken by the liberators to save them. After the liberation, the Allied soldiers made a documentary film presenting the conditions at the camp. This is one of very few audio-visual recordings made at that time to show the evidence of atrocities committed by the Nazis in the concentration camps. To prevent the epidemics from further spreading, the British soldiers burnt down most prisoner barracks. Later on, the watchtowers and other camp facilities were also destroyed. Prisoners were moved to the buildings of the former camp administration. Until 1951, a DP camp was functioning there and that was the place where some former prisoners, mainly of Jewish origin, made their decisions about the direction for further migration.

According to some estimations, about 50 000 prisoners of the KL Bergen-Belsen lost their lives there, together with approximately 20 000 prisoners of war.

1. A commemorative wall dedicated to Bergen-Belsen

2. The marking of a mass grave

Konzentrationslager Bergen-Belsen
1945-52 / 1966 / 1990 / 2000 / 2007

Total Liquidation of the Concentration Camp Buildings

Due to the preventive burning of the prisoner barracks, very little remained from the original camp infrastructure. To mark the scene of the crimes, British soldiers set up a temporary information board stating that the area had been the former concentration camp, the number of prisoners who had been murdered there and the number of prisoners who died after the liberation of the camp. The text explicitly indicated the perpetrators of the crimes – the Nazi German regime.

First Monuments and The Cemetery-Park Site

During the first months after the liberation, upon the initiative of some Polish former prisoners, a birch cross was set up at the post-camp area. In April 1946, a group of Jews staying in the DP camp erected a monument dedicated to their loved ones who had been murdered at the camp. It was a 2-meter rectangular cuboid topped with a sphere and covered with the inscriptions referring to the Jewish sepulchral tradition: the Star of David and a bas-relief depicting broken trees. In 1947 the British administration of the Allied occupation zone in Germany erected a commemorative 20-meter obelisk, standing against the background of the Remembrance Wall covered with inscriptions in the national languages spoken by the former prisoners of the camp. The work related to the establishment of the cemetery and the park site were finished in 1952. In the subsequent years, the entrance section with the system of paths and the artistic setting of the mass graves were added. Additionally, some Jewish tombstones were erected to honour prisoners who had been identified, including the symbolic graves of Anne Frank and her sister Margot.

Starting from 1945, the arrangement and development of the post-camp area were carried out by a team of German designers led by Wilhelm Hübotter, under the supervision of the British military commission. Inspired by cemeteries from the First World War, the designers suggested the removal of the remaining post-camp infrastructure and the establishment of a park site functioning as a necropolis, without any accentuation of historical individuality. However, their concept was never implemented. The flat cleared area was spatially accentuated with burial mounds set up at the places of mass graves. The remaining area surrounding the moorland around the graves was covered by the forest, along with other traces of the former topography of the concentration camp.a necropolis, without any accentuation of historical individuality. However, their concept was never implemented. The flat cleared area was spatially accen-

3. The obelisk with the Remembrance Wall

4. The symbolic tombstones with the Jewish Monument

tuated with burial mounds set up at the places of mass graves. The remaining area surrounding the moorland around the graves was covered by the forest, along with other traces of the former topography of the concentration camp.

In 2000, a new building was constructed in the birch grove at the boundaries of the camp area – the House of Silence (Das Haus der Stille). Built on the rhombus plan, the building consists of chromium steel (the walls), glass (the roof) and granite (the floor). Designed by Ingem Reuter and Gerd Winner, the House of Silence functions as an ecumenical chapel, a contemplation site for visitors arriving at the former concentration camp.

Revitalisation of the Commemoration Site

The first historical exhibition in the post-camp area took place in 1966, in a small building that was extended during the 1990s.

At the beginning of the 21st century, a project of intensive international scientific research on the history of the camp was started. The collected materials documenting the history of the KL Bergen-Belsen resulted in a demand for a museum building with archives and a scientific centre where further analytical research could be continued. In 2002, an architectural competition was announced for a design of a documentation centre and a landscape design for the post-camp areas to display the main elements of the historical layout of the former concentration camp.

Having won the competition, the Sinai studio from Berlin developed a design for the architecture of the landscape that would partially disrupt the idea of an idyllic park. The area along the main axis formed by the road of the former camp was revealed by the clearing of the forest that had been covering it before. The exposed relics were provided with the relevant information boards presenting their history. The system developed to lead visitors around the place was aimed at making the historical topography of the genocide scene more readable to them.

Architecture of Commemoration

The main accentuation in the new arrangement of the commemoration site was the exhibition building implemented according to the design provided by the KSP Engel und Zimmermann Architekten studio. The new monumental site was opened to the public in 2007. The new exhibition building and the spacious Square of Anne Frank form an entrance zone to the monumental site. A 200-meter long building is situated along the axis of the pre-war rural road that had been blocked by the construction of the concentration camp at that place.

The exhibition surface of 1500 m² was designed by Hans-Dieter Schaal to follow the story presenting the particular stages in the history of the site. The foundations of the Documentation Centre do not trespass the sacrum boundaries of the former camp, however the edge of the building is supported several meters behind the boundary line. The minimalistic shape, the external atria and passageways are all connected by a symbolic Stoney Path leading visitors to a concrete platform located in the geographical centre of the former camp. The platform reveals a view to a cleared zone displaying the remains of the camp infrastructure. To provide better understanding of the historical topography of the camp, there are two models installed on the platform – one presents the camp architecture as it was in 1944 and the other – the contemporary development of the former camp area. From the platform, it is possible to follow several walking paths for further exploration of the commemoration site: the mass graves and monuments from the years 1945 -1947, the historical entrance zone and the cemetery where the Soviet prisoners of war were buried.

5. The entrance square in front of the monumental site

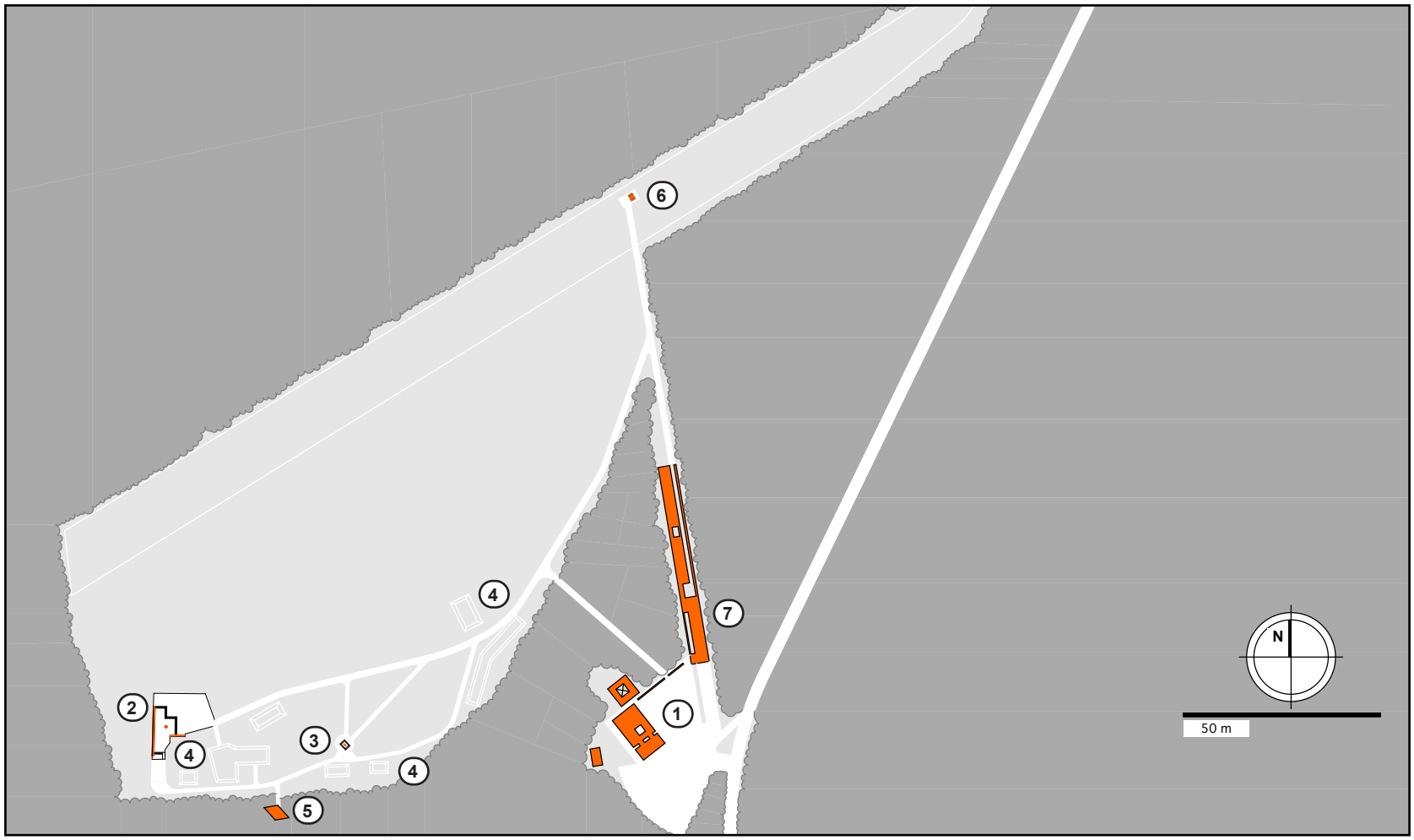
6. The entrance to the museum building

7. An atrium in the museum

8. The overhanging part of the museum building

9. Haus der Stille

10. The inside of the contemplation room



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Bergen-Belsen

Legend:

1. The entrance square
2. The obelisk with the Remembrance Wall
3. The Jewish Monument
4. The mass graves
5. The building of Haus der Stille
6. A platform with the spatial models of the historical areas of the concentration camp and the contemporary monumental site
7. The museum building

Photographs: Bergen-Belsen, July 2011

Lublin / Majdanek

Konzentrationslager Lublin / Majdanek 1941 - 1945

The German concentration camp in Lublin was established in October 1941. The official name was the KL Lublin, however, it was commonly referred to as the KL Majdanek. The name stemmed from the name of a district in the city of Lublin (Majdan Tatarski) adjacent to the camp premises. The main reason for the establishment of the camp in that particular location was the policy pursued by the Third Reich based on displacement actions aimed at the Germanisation of the regions of Lublin and Zamość. Initially, it was planned to establish a small camp for the internment of Soviet prisoners of war but later on, upon Heinrich Himmler's decision, a concentration camp was established there in 1941, in the area that was to cover 270 ha to accommodate dozens of thousands of prisoners. Those development plans were hindered by the difficulties experienced by the German army on the Eastern Front. The KL Majdanek was characterised by dreadful living conditions – prisoners died *en masse* because of starvation, hypothermia and contagious diseases that were spreading fast due to disastrous sanitary conditions. German statistics of 1943 indicated that the mortality rates recorded in the KL Majdanek were the highest in the entire concentration camp system.

At the beginning of 1942, similarly to the KL Auschwitz, the KL Majdanek became an immediate extermination camp. In August the construction of three gas chambers was commenced. The chambers were equipped with an installation for the extermination of prisoners with the use of Zyklon B and carbon monoxide. Known as the Bloody Wednesday, 3rd November 1943 was the day when the camp garrison members carried out the *Erntefest* action: about 18 000 of Jewish prisoners were shot to the sounds of loud music. The corpses were burnt in the crematoria and on the burning stacks. It was also intended to mix the ashes with dirt and use the mixture as fertiliser. The facilities of the camp included special warehouses for keeping objects looted on the Jewish prisoners sent by the Nazis to find death at other concentration camps. Those items were later on sent to the territory of the Third Reich.

During three years of its operation, the camp was the place of imprisonment for almost 150 000 people. The recent scientific research indicates that 78 000 prisoners were murdered there. The largest group of victims - 59 000 prisoners - were of Jewish origin.

At the end of March 1944, the Germans started evacuating the camp. On 23rd July, the soldiers of the Red Army entered the premises of the camp and in that way the KL Majdanek became the first concentration camp liberated by the Allied armies. Shortly after the liberation, the NKVD used the facilities of the KL Majdanek for establishing a filtration camp to isolate the soldiers of the Home Army and the Peasant Battalions and German prisoners. The last military units left the camp premises in the winter 1949.

1. The wooden prisoner barracks

Państwowe Muzeum na Majdanku
1943 / 1947 / 1961 / 1969

The Monument in the Times of Imprisonment

The first commemorative object in the KL Majdanek was constructed as early as in 1943. Upon the order of the camp garrison members, a group of prisoners made a column which was intended to become a decorative element in the camp area. The column was topped with three birds sculptured by Maria Albin Boniecki (the top element was knocked off the column after the liberation of the camp and reconstructed in 1969). The official interpretation of the birds formulated for the German garrison members referred to the heraldry of the Third Reich, however in fact, the prisoners intended to refer to the eagle from the Polish national emblem and to the symbol of freedom. Moreover, inside the column, the prisoners secretly placed a small container with the ashes of prisoners' bodies burnt in the crematorium. In this way, the sculpture acquired its sepulchral character.

During the first months after the liberation of the camp, some remains of the victims were discovered in the vicinity of the crematorium. They were buried in a mass grave, temporarily commemorated with a birch cross.

2. The Column of Three Eagles – the first monument

The First Museum in the Post-camp Area

The activities aimed at protecting the execution site had been already undertaken during the war operations carried out in Europe. In November 1944, by a decree issued by the Polish Committee of National Liberation, the first museum was established as the first institution of that type in the world. Three years later, the museum was officially sanctioned by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland as the State Museum at Majdanek. At the same time, the expropriation of the land against compensation in favour of the State Treasury was announced by the Minister of Culture and Art. Two years later, by the ordinance issued by the Minister of Culture and Art, the boundaries of the museum were precisely defined. Its area covered 96 ha of the former camp infrastructure.

Protection of the Remains of Prisoners Murdered at the Camp

In 1947, the tidying work was commenced at the former camp area. The ashes of the victims were collected and buried in a mass grave. All the work was performed by soldiers, social organisations and individual citizens of Lublin who wanted to honour their loved ones who had died in the camp. Within several months, a pyramid was piled up from 1300 m^3 of soil mixed with the ashes or the camp victims. The 7-meter mound was a central commemoration site until the end of the 1960s.

3. Execution trenches

In the years 1948-1949, the area of several dozen hectares of the former prison premises was covered with trees planted there to form a commemoration park. Over the next decade, the trees grew tall enough to cover the surviving camp architecture. Hence, a decision was made to look for a new spatial development formula that would allow for the exposition of the original topography of the site. The trees and bushes were cleared.

The First Concepts for the Spatial Development of the Areas of the Former KL Lublin

Most buildings in the KL Lublin were successively demolished due to their poor technical condition and the lack of funds for their current maintenance. The constructional infrastructure of Majdanek was of much lower quality than the infrastructure of Auschwitz and many years of the presence of the military units in the camp premises contributed to their deterioration. Nevertheless, a considerable part of the facilities functioning from the beginning of the museum has been preserved.

At the beginning of the 1960s, Romuald Dylewski, an architect, developed a concept for the spatial development of the museum. The next decade was dedicated to the operations aimed at restoring the original character to the post-camp area. Some prisoner barracks were preserved and provided with conservation treatment, the remains were marked with gravel. The camp bath, gas chambers and crematoria were reconstructed. Also the watchtowers, guardhouses and barbed wire fences were renovated. In the landscape, the execution ditches and the areas surrounding the gas chambers were more explicitly defined. A paved way, referred to as the Road of Homage and Remembrance, leads toward the commemorative mound.

Monumental Recalling of the Past

In 1967, upon the request of some associations of former prisoners and victims' families, an open competition was announced for an architectural and sculptural design of a monument to commemorate the victims of the extermination camp at Majdanek. The jury did not award any competing team with the first place but the second place was awarded to a design presented by Stanisław Strzyżyński and Juliusz Kłeczek. The concept assumed the construction of a monumental wall composed of 26 granite blocks and decorated with a bas-relief depicting prisoners standing on the roll call square. However, it was actually the third awarded design that was eventually implemented. It was developed by Wiktor Tołkin and Janusz Dembek. In September 1969, the Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom at Majdanek was unveiled. The monumental site is composed of three main elements: the Gate, the Road of Homage and Remembrance and the Mausoleum. Constructed of reinforced concrete, the Gate is 10m tall, 34m long and 7m wide. The Mausoleum is covered with a dome with a diameter of 35m. In terms of cubage, this has been one of the largest monuments ever constructed in the former Nazi concentration camps. At present, the foreground of the former camp area is dominated by the monumental Gate complex.

According to the original concept, the formula of the monument refers to a description of the gates of hell in *The Divine Comedy* by Dante. The main accentuation point is a monumental body supported by two pillars strongly anchored in the earth embankment. The massive lintel of the gate is shaped as a dynamic sculptural installation, based on the engineering structures. In front of the gate, the first section of the Road of Homage and Remembrance is started. It takes the form of a ravine, with some massive rocks suspended at its upper parts to increase the sense of anxiety in visitors as they come out of the ravine, using steep non-ergonomic steps. In the walls of the ravine, the authors designed a crack revealing a view to green vegetation that symbolises hope that had accompanied prisoners on their arrival to the camp. After visitors reach the platform under the gate lintel, a view to the reconstructed part of the former camp is revealed to them. They can also see the Mausoleum situated at the end of the compositional axis of the site.

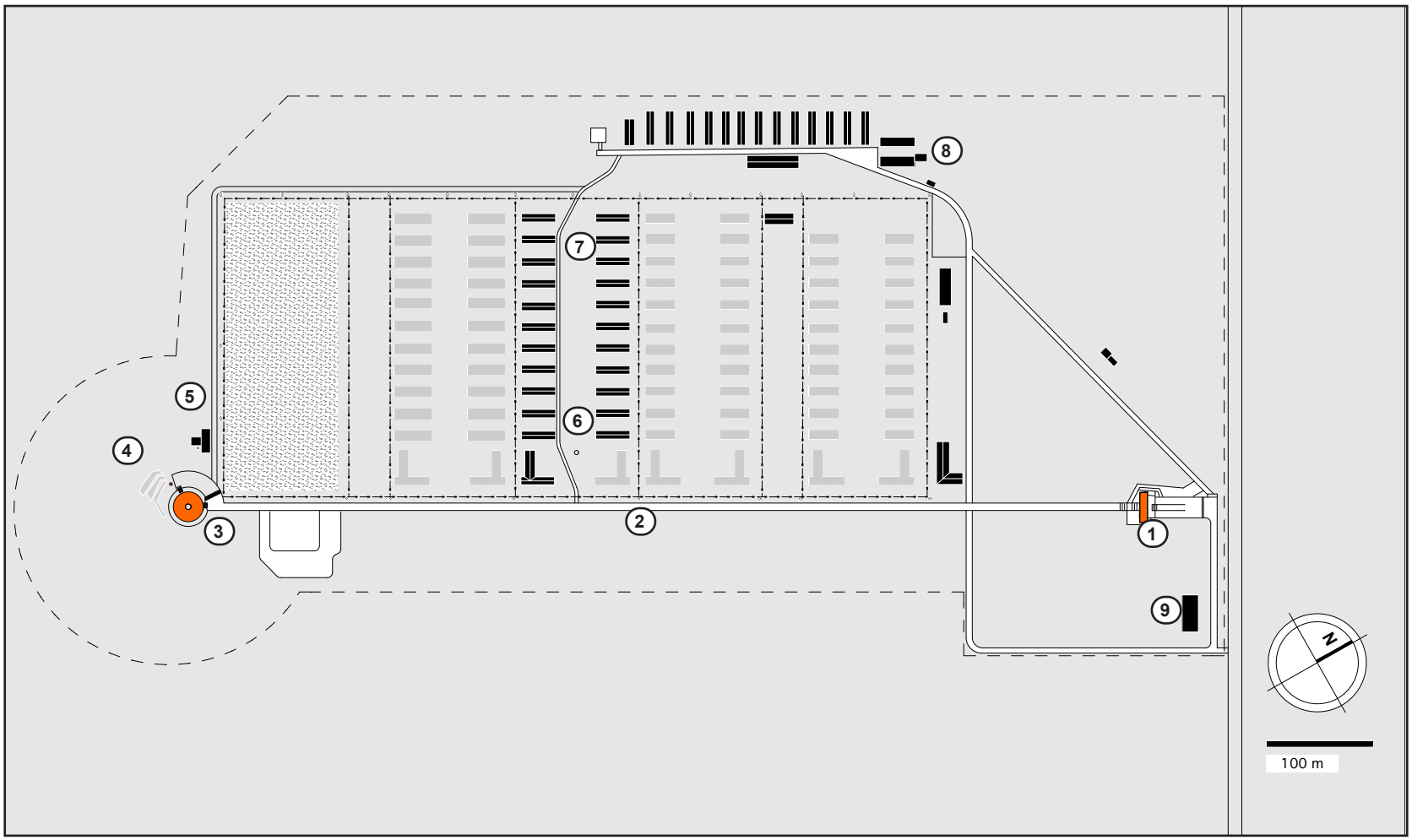
The composition of the site is based on two powerful elements, strong entrance and monumental contemplation place – connected by the third element – the road that forces visitors to participate actively in the experience of the site. Over 1 km long, the Road of Homage and Remembrance leads visitors from the Gate to the Mausoleum. It forms a strong compositional axis that corresponds to the historically functional circulation route connecting the camp with the execution place - the crematorium. While walking along the Road, visitors pass the original and reconstructed facilities of the former camp. The symbolic pilgrimage ends at a granite urn, where the ashes of deceased prisoners have been put to their final rest after their removal from the previously existing burial mound. The reliquary is protected with a monumental dome supported on three massive pillars, the shape of which refers to the Roman Pantheon. The remains of the camp victims are plunged in the twilight, only partially illuminated through a circular skylight. The external frieze of the dome is decorated with a bas-relief similar in its dynamics to the ornamental elements on the gate lintel. Among the crevices of the frieze that have been shaped to resemble open graves, an inscription has been made. The message comes from a fragment of Franciszek Fenikowski's poem: Let our fate be a warning to you …

4. A sculptural detail of the frieze on the dome

5. The Gate Monument

6. The Mausoleum Monument

7. The mound of ashes under the dome of the Mausoleum Monument



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the former KL Lublin/Majdanek

Legend:

1. The main entrance to the memorial site – the Gate Monument
2. The Road of Homage and Remembrance
3. The Mausoleum Monument
4. Execution trenches
5. The crematorium
6. The Column of Three Eagles
7. The prisoner barracks accommodating the museum exhibition
8. The building with the former camp bath and gas chambers
9. The visitor centre

Photographs: Lublin, September 2008

Kulmhof am Ner

SS-Sonderkommando Kulmhof 1941 - 1943 / 1944 - 1945

The first German Nazi mass extermination camp was located in Chełmno-on-the Ner in the vicinity of Koło, a town in Greater Poland. It was established upon an order issued by Arthur Greiser, the governor of Reichsgau Wartheland, an administrative region created by the Third Reich in the occupied territory of the Republic of Poland. Genocidal activities were started in the camp in December 1941, still before the provisions of the Wannsee conference, when the Nazis established a detailed plan of mass extermination of Jews. The location of the camp provided relative isolation and convenient communication with the nearby Jewish communities. It was here where the processes of mass extermination were being tested to be applied later in other camps under the *Reinhardt* action. In the KL Kulmhof prisoners were murdered by gassing with exhaust fumes in mobile gas chambers installed in trucks specially adjusted for that purpose. The victims, including Roma people, were inhabitants of the nearby ghettoes in Koło, Dąbie, Kłodawa, Izbica Kujawska, Łódź and other regions under the administration of Reichsgau Wartheland.

The extermination camp consisted of two areas. The SS garrison members established infrastructure adequate to camp purposes in the palace buildings in Chełmno, the inhabitants of which had been displaced. Mass transports of prisoners arrived at the palace, where German guards forced them to use the bath and then to pass through a makeshift tunnel leading straight into the gas chambers waiting in the trucks parked next to the palace. The bodies of murdered people were transported to mass graves dug in the clearings in the forest of Rzuchów, four kilometres away. Prisoners selected from mass transports were forced by the SS-Sonderkommando to bury the corpses and tidy up the area. In the summer 1942, upon Hitler's order, a special SS group started to destroy all the traces of the genocide committed at the camp by burning the corpses already buried in the mass graves and grinding bones in special grinders.

On 7th April 1943, while continuing the liquidation of the camp, the German garrison members blew up the palace in Chełmno and the crematoria in the forest of Rzuchów. The operation of the camp was suspended until the spring 1944, when some makeshift facilities were constructed in the forest camp (Waldlager) to exterminate Jews transported from the liquidated ghetto in Łódź. The last executions were carried out by the Germans in January 1945. According to the results of the recent scientific research, it has been estimated that about 150 000 – 200 000 people were murdered in the SS-Sonderkommando Kulmhof. They mainly Jews from the Wartheland region and almost 4 500 Roma people.

1. The main spatial accentuation of the monumental site

2. The monument – the southern view

Muzeum byłego niemieckiego Obozu Zagłady Kulmhof w Chełmnie nad Nerem
1957 / 1964 / 1990 / 1994

Years of Oblivion

In 1957, a humble monument was erected in the vicinity of the ruins of the palace in Chełmno. It was a simple stone monolith with an inscription: *This place has been sanctified by the blood of thousands of victims of the Nazi genocide. Honour their memory*. This form resembled a number of other commemorative plaques installed in Poland at that time to honour victims of the Second World War. The post-camp area, where the palace and the granary used to be located, was passed under the administration of the Agricultural Municipal Cooperative. The authorities of the cooperative built some warehouses in the post-camp site and run the place in the subsequent years. More attention was paid to the area of the former forest camp. In the 1950s, some occasional tidying work actions were carried out in the forest of Rzuchów. The mass graves were secured and marked later, in the 1960s, during the implementation of the monumental site.

The Monument

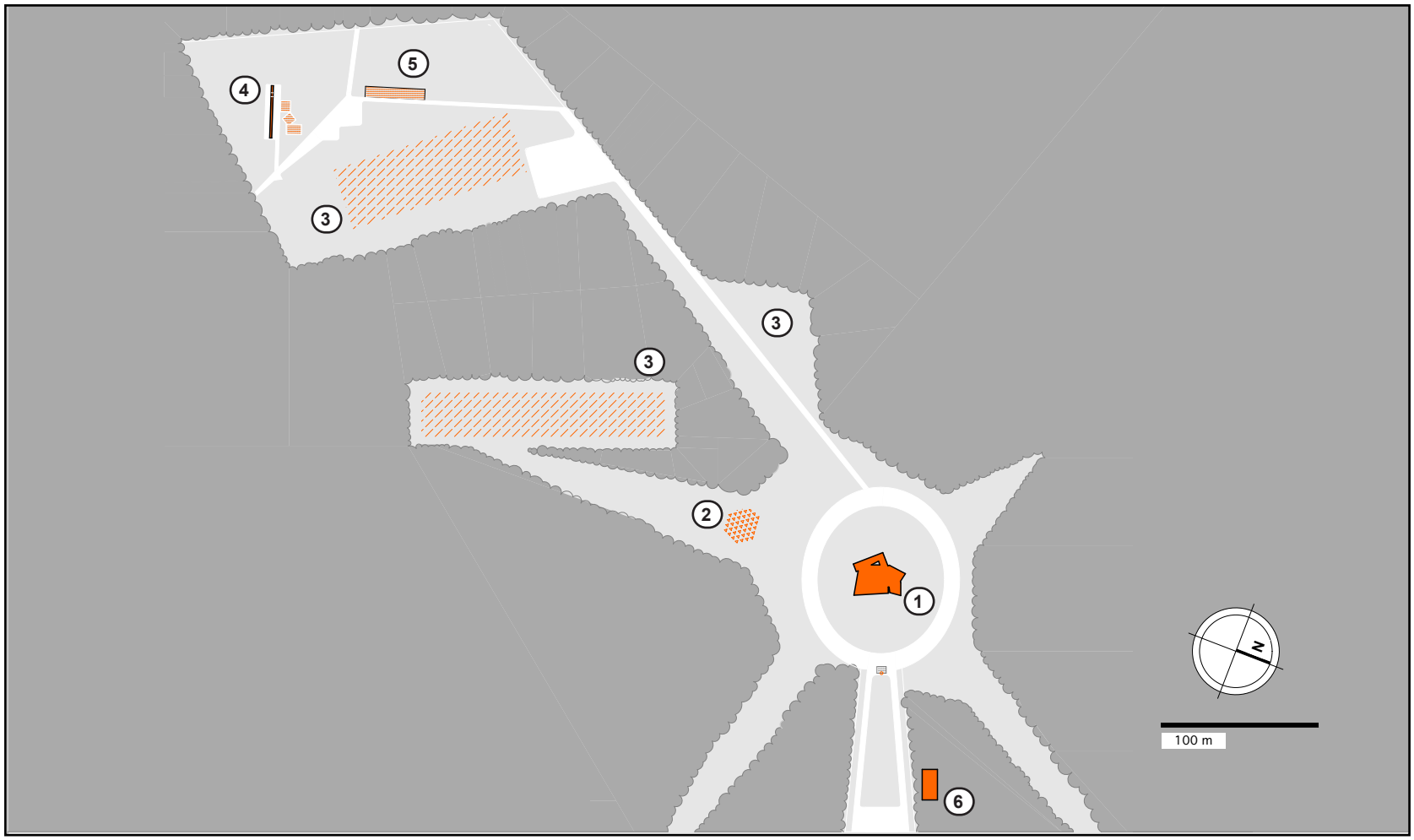
In 1961, the Association of Polish Artists and Designers in Poznań announced a competition for a design of a large-scale commemorative formula dedicated to the victims of the extermination camp in Kulmhof. A year later, the concept presented by Józef Stasiński, a sculptor, and Jerzy Buszkiewicz, an architect, was selected for the implementation, out of 38 other designs sent for the competition. On 27th September 1964, a monumental site was opened to the public. Its central element was a monumental concrete slab shaped as a deformed polygon of the span of 36m, supported on five conical pillars. One of the walls is decorated with a bas-relief depicting a mourning procession of prisoners. As its continuation on the next wall, an inscription is engraved : *We remember*. On the opposite side, a dramatic appeal has been placed on the wall. It comes as a fragment of a letter written by a former prisoner of the camp: *We were all taken, from old men to babies, from the vicinity of the towns of Koło and Dąbie. We were taken to the woods and there we were gassed, shot and burnt…Now, we are asking our future brothers to punish our murderers. We are once again asking the witnesses of our oppression, who live in this area to spread the word about this genocide to the world*. Initially, there was an intention to build exhibition rooms under the massive plate, however, the exhibition function has never been implemented there.

The large-scale sculpture is located in the centre of the paths radially cut in the woods into six directions, leading to the important points in the topography of the historical site. The possible locations of the mass graves were marked with some symbolic cemetery plots. In 1987, a museum of the former extermination camp in Chełmno-on-the Ner was established as a branch of the Regional Museum in Konin. On 17th June 1990, a small museum building was opened to the public and a 30-meter long concrete Wall of Remembrance was unveiled to honour Jewish people murdered in Chełmno in the years 1941-1945. It is dedicated to individual forms of commemoration, usually plaques. In the wall, a symbolic gate is situated, above which an inscription has been written in Hebrew: *This is the gate through which only the righteous shall pass.* Next to the wall, along the road leading to the central monument, some smaller monuments were located in the 1990s. They were founded by various communities to commemorate the tragedy that had taken place there. At the same time, the outlines of the crematorium foundations were recreated, as a result of the archaeological research work carried out at that location.

The Lapidarium

On 22nd August 1994, a lapidarium was established to the left side of the monument, upon the initiative of the Israeli compatriot association in Turek and other nearby towns. The Jewish tombstones came from the Jewish cemetery in Turek. In the years 1997 – 2005, in the area of the former camp, some archaeological research was carried out that contributed to the improvement of knowledge on the history of the camp and its topography.

3. The Lapidarium



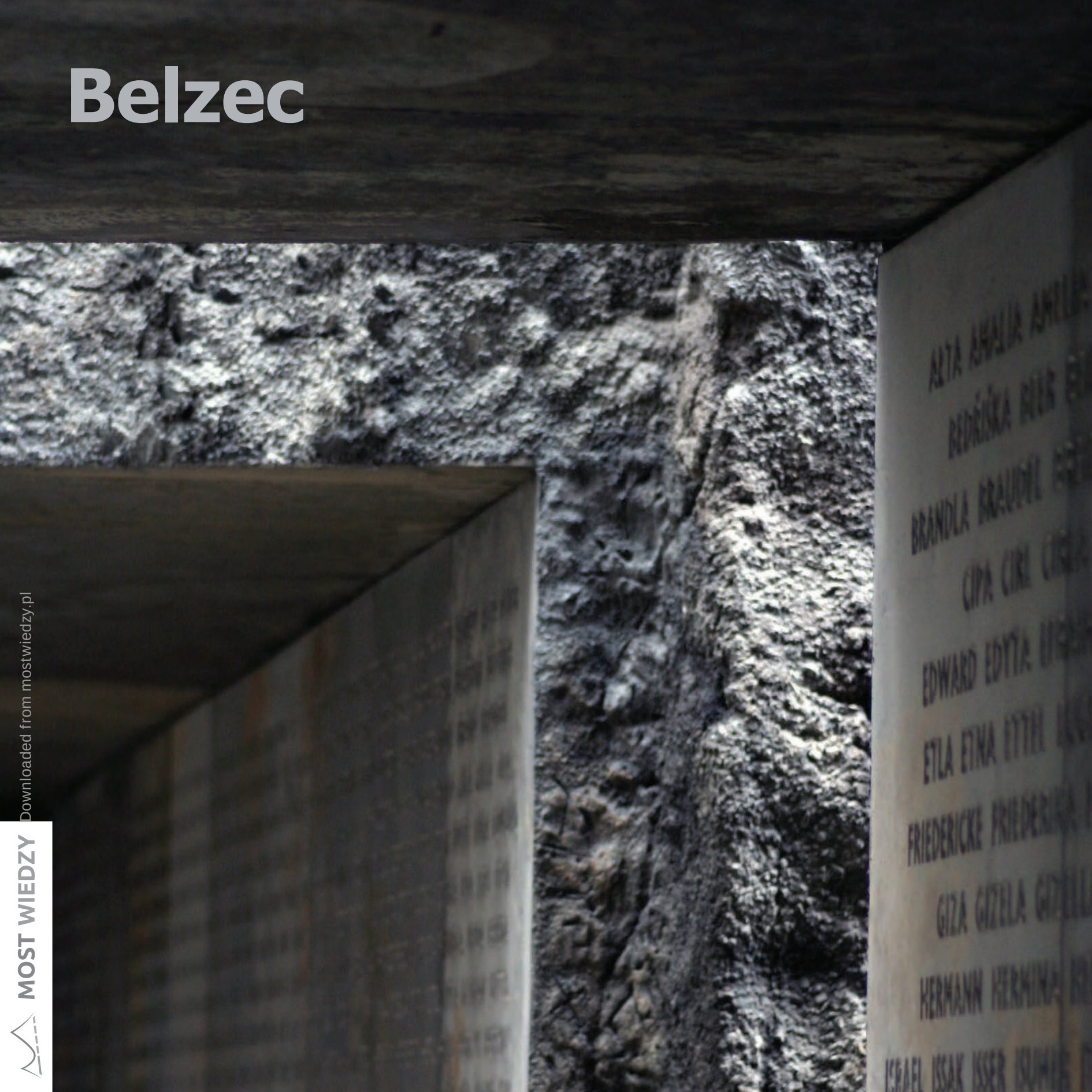
The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the Kulmhof am Ner extermination camp

Legenda:

1. The Monument to the Victims of the Kulmhof am Ner Extermination Camp
2. The Lapidarium
3. The location of the mass graves
4. The Wall of Remembrance
5. The ruins of the crematorium furnaces
6. The building accommodating the museum exhibition

Photographs: Chełmno nad Nerem, September 2008

Belzec



Sonderkommando Belzec der Waffen-SS 1941 - 1942

In November 1941, the first extermination camp was established in Bełżec to implement the aims of the *Aktion Reinhardt* – a programme developed by the Third Reich authorities to provide the so-called "final solution to the Jewish question". The construction of the camp was supervised by Odilo Globocnik, the SS and police commander in the Lublin district of General Governorate. Several months before, in the vicinity of Bełżec, a forced labour camp had been functioning, where several hundred Jews, Roma and Sinti people had died. Selected for the location of the Sonderkommando Bełżec der Waffen-SS, Kozielsk Hill was covered with woods and was conveniently based close to a railway side-track providing communication with the nearby districts: Lublin, Galicia and Kraków inhabited by 1 million Jews. Since the beginning of its operation, the unit was intended to be a mass extermination camp. The first mass transports of prisoners arrived in March 1942. The camp was treated as an experimental centre before the establishment of the mass extermination camps in Treblinka and Sobibór. Compared to other concentration camps functioning in the Third Reich, the camp in Bełżec had a small garrison and not very extensive facilities. The SS garrison consisted of 20 people, most of whom were previously related to *Aktion T4*, the Nazi programme of exterminating sick and mentally disabled prisoners. The camp garrison group was supported by guards sent from the SS-Wachmannschaften unit, who were recruited in an SS training camp in Trawniki. Jewish prisoners selected from the mass transports were forced to work at the segregation of objects stolen from prisoners transported to the camp and to remove corpses from the gas chambers. The area of the camp covered about 7ha and it was divided into two functional parts separated by a barbed wire fence. The lower camp contained the administrative and economic zone, including guardhouses, barracks for watchmen and warehouses. The upper camp was the place with the facilities used directly for mass extermination - the gas chambers and mass graves. The genocidal process was carried out in a hurry. The system of checking prisoners in was formulated in such a way that people were made to believe that they arrived at a transit camp. Having left the ramp, prisoners were sent to a changing room, where all their belongings were taken away from them. Next, they were driven to the gas chambers, where they were gassed with exhaust fumes. At first, bodies of the deceased prisoners were buried in mass graves, however later on, because of sanitary conditions and in order to destroy the evidence of genocide, corpses were burnt on grate installations made of railway tracks. Initially, victims were killed in primitively constructed chambers, gassed with fumes exhausted from a Soviet tank engine. The growing numbers of mass transports soon resulted in the extension of the camp facilities. There were six new brick gas chambers constructed, where the garrison members could simultaneously murder several thousand people. Some contemporary research studies indicate that the Nazis murdered almost 500 000 prisoners in Bełżec – mainly of Jewish origin.

The last mass transports of Jews sent to immediate extermination arrived in December 1942. The Germans destroyed the facilities and ordered to level the area and to plant trees there. There was very little evidence of the genocide committed at the camp left, because there were only two witnesses who had been able to escape. Today, the history of the camp is scarcely known, considering very little camp documentation and only partially preserved archives. Left by the Germans, the post-camp areas were dug by local people in search of valuables and the mass graves were devastated. Over several decades, the tragedy that had occurred on the hill of Kozielsk was pushed to the verge of collective memory.

Protection of the Devastated Area and the First Attempts of Commemorationa

The first monument was erected in 1963. A part of the post-camp area was secured and fenced. The possible location of the mass graves was marked with concrete frames and several concrete vigil lights were set up in its central part.

1. A sculptural detail in the Ohel Niche

Muzeum i Miejsce Pamięci w Bełżcu
1963 / 2004

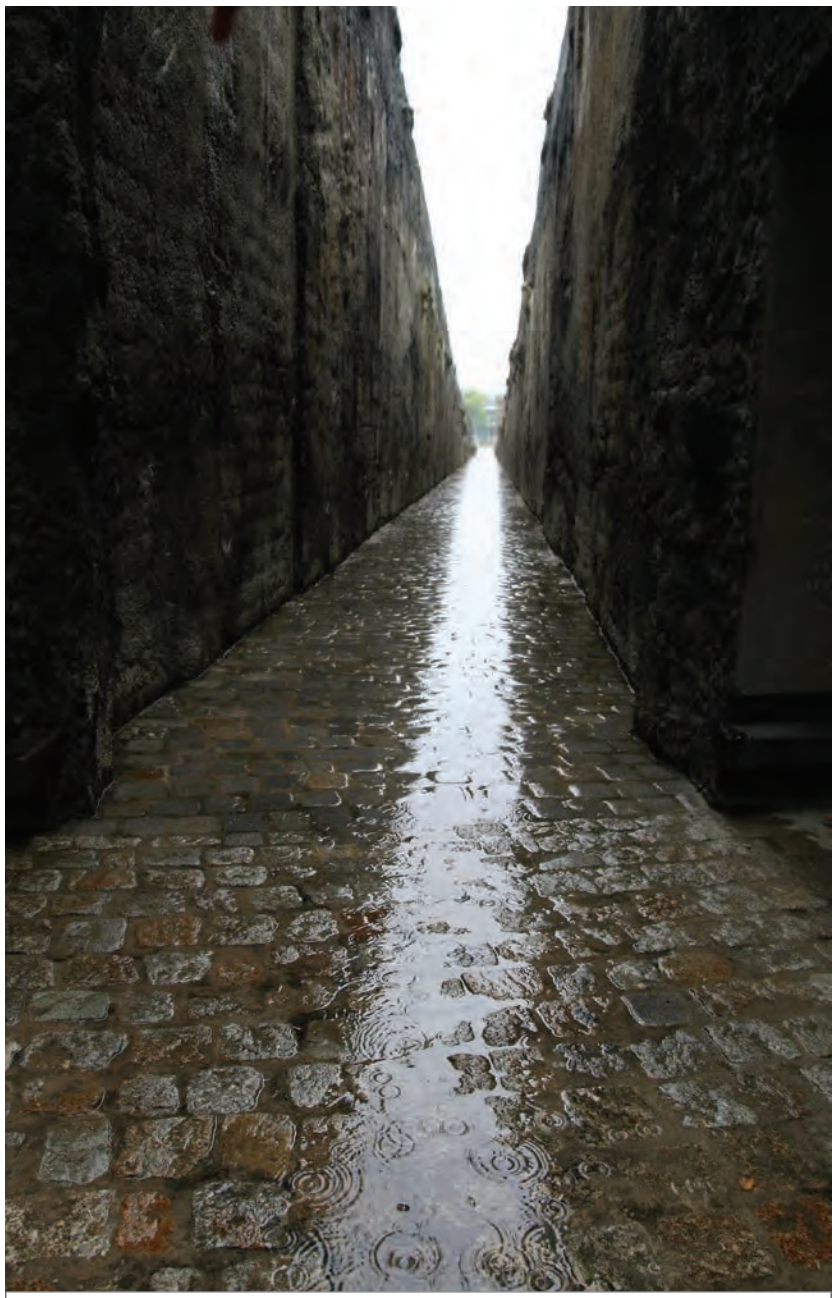
The place where corpses had been burnt was marked with some concrete sarcophagi. The main accentuation of the spatial composition was a cube lined with stone slabs. The cube contained the human remains collected from the nearby area. This was the place where visitors could light vigil candles or put some flowers. The symbolic mausoleum was accompanied by an expressive sculpture designed by Stanisław Strzyżyński, depicting an emaciated figure of a prisoner supporting the body of his companion.

New Spatial Development of the Commemoration Site

In 1993, a tripartite agreement was signed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the American Jewish Committee and the Polish Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites (Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa). Subsequently, a decision was made to establish a new commemorative form of the mass extermination site and to remove the current monument. Four years later, an international architectural competition was announced. The winning concept was developed by Andrzej Sołyga, Zdzisław Pidek and Marcin Roszczyk. It was generally aimed at the protection of the mass graves. On 3rd June 2004, the Museum and Memorial in Bełżec, now a branch of the State Museum at Majdanek, was established.

At its entrance zone, the area of a new monument site was fenced off by a concrete wall. Through a crevice made in the wall, a view onto a metaphorical landscape of commemoration has been revealed. Behind the symbolic gate, to the left, a sculptural installation is placed in the form of a fire-grate made of railway tracks covered with gravel. The entrance to the museum building is located opposite the installation. Apparently inconspicuous in the landscape of commemoration, the minimalistic concrete body of the museum building comes as a complement to the entire site. According to the concept developed by the DDJM architectural studio led by Marek Dunikowski, Piotr Uherek and Piotr Czerwiński, the rhythm of the composition should evoke associations with a line of railway carriages standing still. An element that dominates the monumental site is the slope of the hill covered with grey and black blast furnace slag marking the places where the mass graves of the Holocaust victims are located. Confirmed by the archaeological research, the precise location of the mass graves have been marked with darker spots. Historical oak trees are the only exception from the apocalyptic landscape.

Across the mass grave area, a crevasse was made, starting from the square where the Star of David is engraved in the cast iron plaque, as a metaphorical Place of the Transcension. The crevasse runs di-



2. The crevasse

agonally deeper toward the Ohel Niche – a symbolic space topped with a granite wall featuring a bas-relief, on which a fragment of the Book of Job is engraved: *O Earth, do not cover my blood*, *let there be no resting place for my outcry*, in Polish, English and Hebrew. At this contemplation place, under a stone protrusion, numerous plaques were installed with the names of people who had most probably died at the camp. The way out of the Niche leads up through two flights of stairs, revealing a view onto the memorial site. From here, it is possible to follow an alley paved around the cemetery, along which the names of towns, which mass transports of prisoners had arrived from, are placed in Yiddish, Hebrew and in other languages once spoken by the camp victims.

4. The hill cut by the crevasse

3. The top of the crevasse – the Ohel Niche

5. The stairs leading from the Ohel Niche up to the concrete path

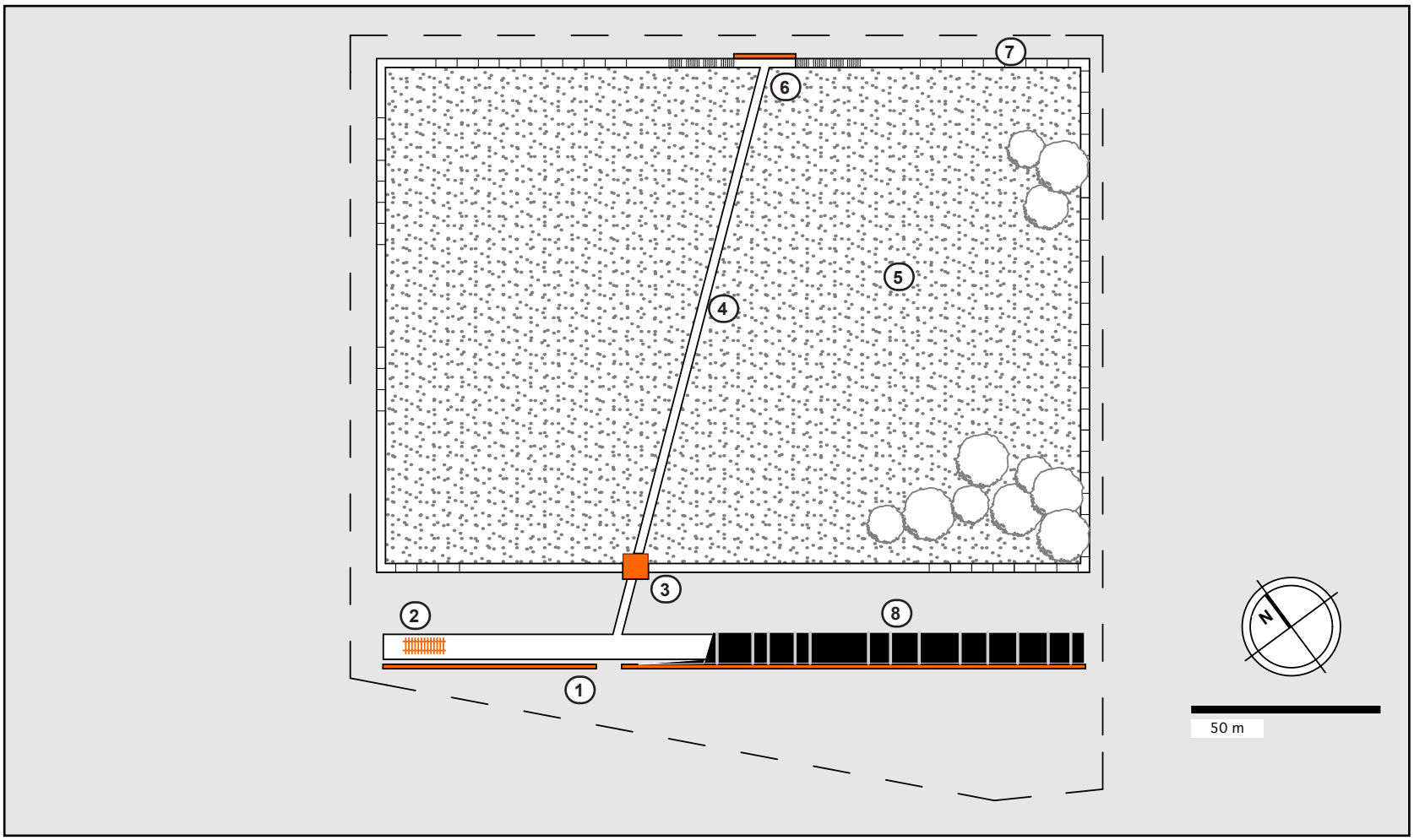
6. A concrete path leading around the memorial site

7. The crevasse leading inside the hill hiding the mass grave

8. Reinforcing bars at the top of the wall

9. The museum building located on the axis of the symbolic railway ramp

10. A detail: blast furnace slag



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the extermination camp in Bełżec

Legend:

1. The main entrance to the monumental site
2. A sculptural installation depicting a fire-grate made of railway tracks
3. A symbolic place of the Transcension
4. The road – a crevasse leading inside the hill
5. A field covered with the blast furnace slag hiding the mass graves
6. The Ohel Niche
7. The alley around the monumental site
8. The building accommodating the museum exposition

Photographs: Bełżec, September 2008

Treblinka

SS-Sonderkommando Treblinka 1942 - 1943

The immediate extermination camp in Treblinka was established in late spring in 1942, under the *Reinhardt* action carried out by the Nazis. It was aimed at physical extermination of Jews living in the General Governorate. The location selected for the new camp was the vicinity of a labour camp (now referred to as Treblinka I), where prisoners had been forced to work at a gravel pit that had been functioning there since 1941. Located near the Bug river, the place was isolated by the forests and it was conveniently communicated with Warsaw. These characteristics were sufficient to make a decision about establishing the fourth camp of immediate extermination. It was built near the village of Małkinia Górna, in the area covering about 17ha. Compared to other Nazi mass extermination camps that had already been in operation, Treblinka II was equipped with more advanced facilities. Fenced and guarded permanently, the area was divided into three functional zones. The residential and administrative zone accommodated barracks for the camp garrison composed of over twenty SS-men and almost a hundred guards. The reception zone located at the railway ramp was arranged to resemble a little village railway station, providing an impression that prisoners were arriving at a transit camp. Behind the buildings that resembled a camp bath and hospital, the mass grave area was spread out. The gas chambers were located in a brick building. They were tiled up to the ceiling, where the shower heads were installed to let in carbon monoxide coming from exhaust fumes. Prisoners were killed within several dozen minutes after they had left railway carriages. Some of them were selected to join tidying *kommandoes*.

The first mass transport of Jews coming from the liquidated ghetto in Warszawa arrived on 23rd July 1942. It was the beginning of the Great Action - *Grossaktion in Warschau* – under which the Germans transported hundreds of thousands of Jews from Warszawa to Treblika. Prisoners came in railway cargo carriages to find their death at the camp. The victims of the genocide committed in Treblinka also included Jews coming from other parts of occupied Poland, from other European countries and from the USSR. Roma people were also killed there. According to some estimates, about 800 000 people were murdered in Treblinka.

Starting from November 1942, bodies of prisoners killed in Treblinka were burnt in mass graves and on cremation stacks. On 2nd August 1943, a group of prisoners organised an armed uprising. Out of 800 participants involved in that revolt, 200 prisoners were able to get out of the camp. After the revolt of prisoners in August 1943, a decision was made to liquidate the extermination camp in Treblinka. In November the unit ceased to exist – the gas chambers and barracks were demolished, the fences were dismantled and the post-camp area covering the ashes of hundreds of thousands of people was levelled by the Germans.

1. The information boards in six languages

2. A stone path along the historical railway ramp

Pomnik Ofiar Obozu Zagłady w Treblince
1964 / 1983

Obliterated Traces of Genocide

For a decade, the post-camp area was neither secured nor commemorated. It was repeatedly penetrated by grave robbers who were looking for any valuables that could have been left there. Such activities were continued until the beginning of tidying work preceding the construction of a monument in the 1960s.

The Large-scale Commemoration Site

The first attempt at defining a commemorative formula for the site was made in 1947. A competition was announced and it was won by a concept developed by Alfons Zielonka and Władysław Niemiec. However, it was never implemented. In 1955, the Central Board of Museums and Monument Protection at the Ministry of Culture and Art (Centralny Zarząd Muzeów i Zabytków Ministerstwa Kultury i Sztuki) announced another competition for spatial development of the site, with the consideration of the commemorative function and protection of the mass graves. In 1964, the winning concept of a large-scale commemoration site designed by Franciszek Duszeńko, Adam Haupt and Franciszek Strynkiewicz was eventually implemented.

The Monument to the Victims of the Extermination Camp in Treblinka covers 17ha of the historical area of the former Nazi camp of mass extermination of Jews in Treblinka II. The area has been arranged as a large-scale monumental site with sculptural and architectural installations visualising the history and topography of the camp. The entrance gate is made of two concrete rectangular cuboids. It is a starting point of a cobbled road, accompanied by a line of symbolic parallel railway tracks made of rhythmically repeated concrete blocks. The road leads to the place where a railway ramp used to be located for the reception of mass transports of prisoners. At this place, a number of stones were set up with the names of the countries from which prisoners had been brought for extermination: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Germany, Poland and the USSR. The ramp reveals a view to the clearing, where a sculpture stands among the stones. Constructed of massive granite blocks, the sculpture dominates the space, evoking associations with the Wailing Wall of Jerusalem. The monument is topped with some expressive bas-reliefs: *Martyrdom, Women and Children, Struggle, Survival and Blessing Hands* and *Menorah*. In front of the monument, a stone has been placed with a *Never more* inscription, translated into Hebrew, Yiddish, Russian, French and German. In the vicinity of the monument, a ditch filled with melted basalt (obtained as a result of blast furnace processes) is located, as an artistic reminiscence of cremation stacks. It is surrounded by an allegorical necropolis. On three fields covered with concrete slabs, 17 000 granite rocks have been set to secure the possible locations of the mass graves. On the symbolic Jewish tombstones, inscriptions have been placed, featuring the names of over 200 communities from which people had been transported to Treblinka for extermination. In 1978, one of the stones was dedicated to the memory of Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit), a renowned pedagogue, and the children under his care from the orphanage in Warszawa, who had died together in the camp. The boundaries of the commemoration site are marked with a line of human-sized stones.

The Museum

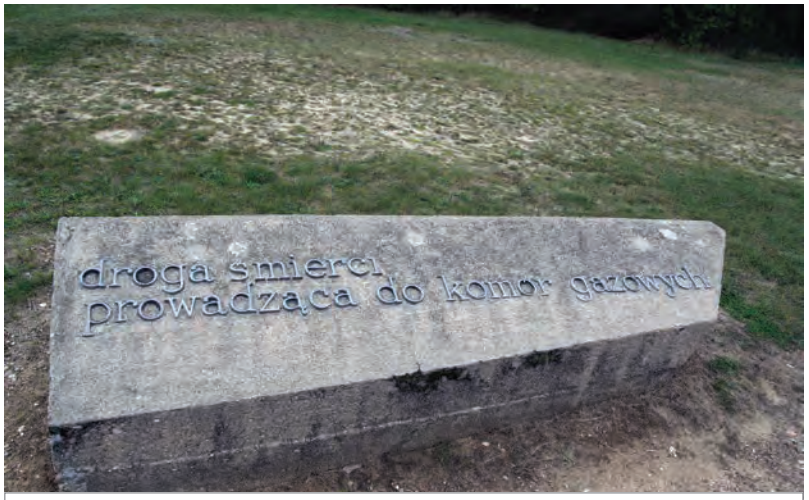
In 1983, the Museum to Struggle and Martyrdom in Treblinka was opened to the public in the area of the former camps of Treblinka I and Treblinka II. Recently, a series of non-invasive archaeological research has been carried out in the post-camp area to improve knowledge on the historical topography of the camp and the location of the mass graves.

3. A line of concrete slabs arranged in the location of the former railway line

4. The boulders with the names of the countries represented by the victims

5. A symbolic railway ramp

6. The Road of Death



7. A sign informing about the historical topography of the place

8. A pit filled with melted basalt

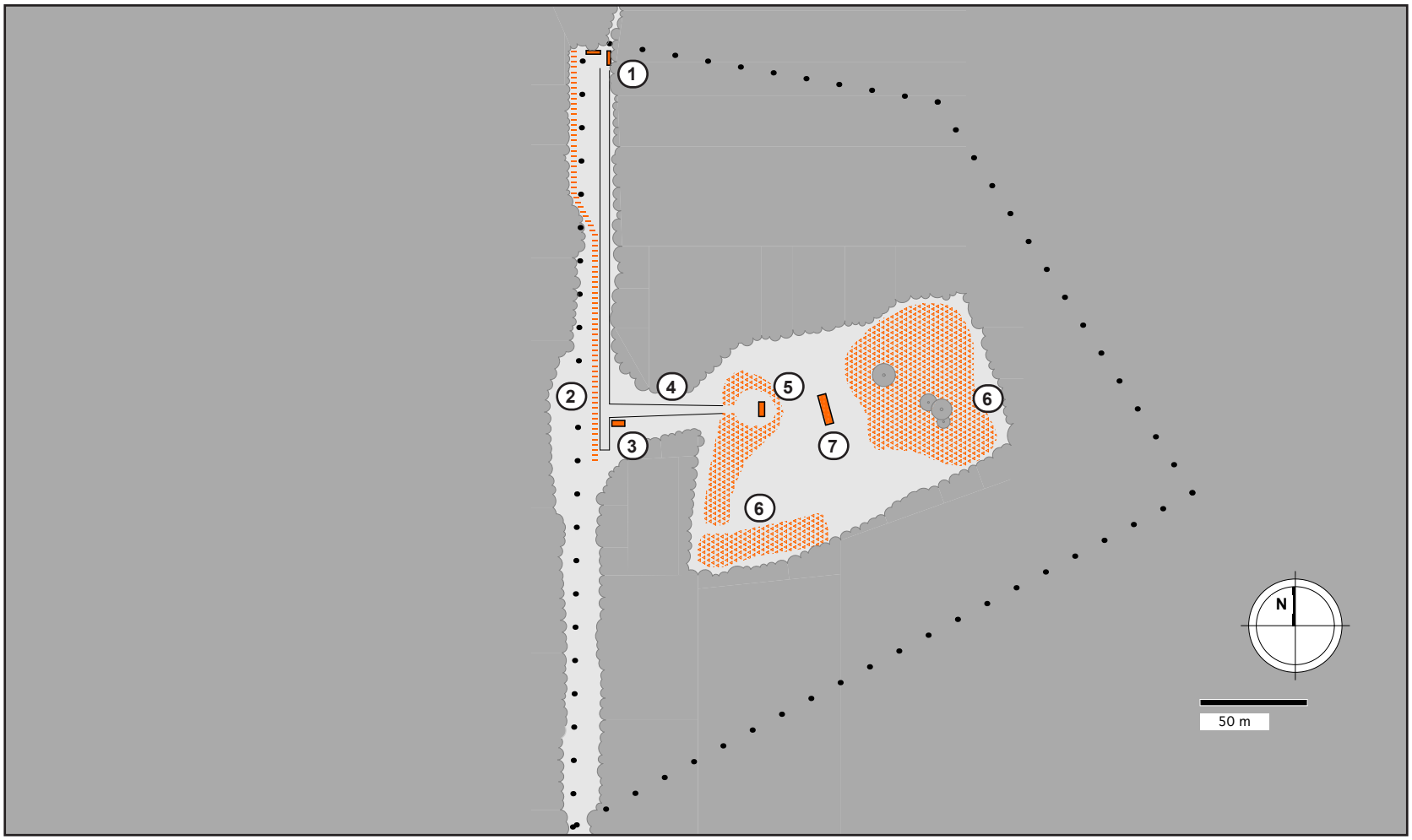
9. A detail marking the location of the cremation site

10. The monument – the main spatial element of the memorial site

11. The symbolic cemetery

12. A stone slab with the Never Again inscription

13. A stone commemorating Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit) and the children



The scheme of the spatial development of the commemoration site at the extermination camp in Treblinka

Legend:

1. The entrance gate leading to the memorial site
2. A symbolic railway ramp
3. The stones with the names of the countries represented by the victims murdered at the camp
4. The Road of Death
5. The monument
6. The fields of the crushed stones protecting the mass graves
7. The symbolic marking of the cremation site

Photographs: Treblinka, September 2008

5 Basic Typology of Architectural Functions in Transformation of the Sites of the Former Nazi Concentration Camps

5.1 Introduction

The development of the areas of the former concentration camps is implemented on the basis of various commemorative activities. Detlef Hoffmann (1999 in: Klei 2011: 22) identifies three basic functions assumed during the process of the post-war adaptation of post-camp areas, namely: *corpus delicti*, i.e.: a proof of the crime committed, a visualisation of the *Never More* idea and a formula of a cemetery. Alexandra Klei (Ibid.: 22) makes this typology even more specific by adding functions indirectly related to commemoration, which are now being developed in response to the needs of the modern society: an institution, an archive, a museum, a site of historical events, an education centre.

While adopting the basic typology pertaining to the functions of architectural transformations of the former concentration camps that have occurred within the last seven decades, it is necessary to define an aim pursued during the undertaken activities.

The first type of architectural arrangements implemented at the post-camp areas is a necropolis. Within just twelve years, the Nazi regime of the Third Reich murdered millions of people, mainly European citizens of Jewish origin. The exact number of victims is impossible to be specified. Similarly, it is impossible to identify all the sites that became the final resting places for prisoners murdered in concentration and immediate extermination camps. Most victims were buried in unmarked, anonymous mass graves, without any due rites and ceremonies. The first activities undertaken in the areas of the liberated camps were aimed to confer the proper cemetery status to all the graves discovered at that time. In terms of significance, the functioning of those projects was based on inspirations related not only to sepulchral but also to monumental and sacral art. The architecture of necropolises that were established after the war used to take various forms, such as cemetery-park sites, war cemeteries inspired by cemeteries that had been established after the First World War, symbolic reliquaries provided with monumental architectural settings that came as spatial accentuations of the monumental sites established in the post-camp areas.

Driving the activities undertaken in the field of architecture, the next type of arrangements was based on the need to preserve the post-camp constructional structure as a proof of the genocide committed by the Nazi regime. Hence, a number of activities were undertaken to preserve the original architectural tissue of the camps. However, a lot was also done in the past to leave very few traces of the physical operation of the concentration camps in the present. Today, only a fraction of the former KL units is covered by conservation protection, in terms of the surviving buildings. Activities carried out in other parts of the post-camp areas include reconstruction of historical facilities and restoration of the readability of the original spatial layouts of the former camps.

A direct reference to the architectural transformation of the post-camp areas related to the maintenance of buildings and ruins as the traces of the past, is the establishment of museums at the sites of the former camps. The first museum units usually adapted the original post-camp buildings that remained in a good technical condition. Former prisoner barracks, functional buildings and administration barracks were adapted for exhibition and archive purposes or as facilities for museum employees. In the 21st century, museums have been located in new buildings, the architecture of which matches the historical context of the tragedy sites. The basic exhibition function has been recently expanded by research and education activities, so at present, it reaches beyond transferring mere historical knowledge and facilitates the exchange of thoughts and opinions.

A considerable number of architectural transformations were focused on approaching the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps as the carriers of collective memory. Monuments in the forms of sculptures, architectural objects or transformed landscapes bring the narration about the past to the post-camp areas - they inform, warn and invite reflection.

Recently, the former extermination sites have become popular tourist destinations. Crowds of people come to the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps to verify their historical knowledge and their images of the past *in situ*. Hence, architectural transformations at the post-camp areas are perceived as tourist products. To meet visitors' expectations and needs, visitor centres have been established at numerous sites of the former camps.

The following chapter presents a discussion on the role of architecture in the activities undertaken to transform the structure of the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps. The chapter provides a description of five basic types of spatial transformations that have been implemented in the discussed areas since the end of the Second World War.

5.2 A Necropolis

5.2.1 Nameless Cemeteries

The areas of the former concentration camps are rarely referred to as cemeteries, despite the fact that they are ones indeed, *in their real and symbolic aspects* (Kranz 2009: 38). Carried out at the units of the Nazi terror, the extermination programme resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of people. A proper dignified burial of the deceased in the KL units was extremely rare. Prisoners were buried in mass graves located in forests and fields surrounding concentration camps, usually anonymously and without any traditional religious ceremonies. For most victims' families and relatives, the burial in an unmarked grave meant that it would be impossible to find any information about the location of the remains of the victims. The Nazis consistently obliterated traces of the atrocities they had committed. With an increase in the mortality rates among prisoners, the desecration of the deceased also became intensified. Decomposition of human bodies in the mass graves resulted in multiple complications, such as the smell of decay spreading in the area, sanitary conditions that became insufficient and threatening to the functioning of the KL units. Hence, crematorium furnaces soon became the standard facilities in the KL units to incinerate corpses. Initially, prisoners' ashes were sent back to their families in clay urns. However, later on, ashes were thrown into the mass graves located around the camp areas. Special SS *kommandoes* (Sonderkommando 1005) were responsible for supervising exhumation work intended to destroy any traces of mass executions. Such activities took place mainly at the immediate extermination camps. The remains of the victims were dug out by prisoners forced to participate in exhumation work. Then, the corpses were burnt in crematoria, ground in grain mills and damped into rivers or used for the production of fertilisers (Angrick 2015).

The system of Nazi concentration camps led to the establishment of hundreds of nameless necropolises. The process of providing them with the appropriate cemetery status continues to the present day. In most cultures, a tomb comes as an expression of honouring the deceased, caring for the future fate of their souls and keeping them in our living memory. People murdered at concentration camps and immediate extermination camps had been deprived of the proper last service. After the war, marking the mass graves was carried out according to various procedures. They followed the models of cemeteries established after the First World War or adapted the forms of monumental commemoration sites of sepulchral nature. The process of providing special care to the proper form of the burial of the victims who had been killed in concentration and extermination camps did not end in the 20th century. Today, the projects on the proper securing of mass graves and providing them with the adequate cemetery formula are still being continued.

5.2.2 Mass Graves in Park and Cemetery Sites

After the Allied armies had entered the premises of concentration camps to liberate them, soldiers were met by stacks of corpses rammed into railway carriages, piles of human ashes around the crematoria and overcrowded barracks full of dying prisoners. The burials of the bodies found in the camps were often carried out in a hurry to prevent epidemic hazard. In Bergen-Belsen, the British Army soldiers decided to bury the corpses as quickly as possible in mass graves located in the area of the former camp. The burials were accompanied by funeral ceremonies attended by former prisoners, clergymen and soldiers of the liberating armies. Piled over the mass graves, the burial mounds were marked with humble stone plaques providing information only about the number of bodies buried there in 1945. They indicated a direction to the further development of the post-camp area, namely: creating a cemetery park site there. Undoubtedly, the site fostered contemplation, however, green planting and destruction of the camp facilities considerably obliterated the traces of the former KL Bergen-Belsen that had been functioning at that place for five years. Additionally, such a compositional formula of the architectural transformation of the post-camp area has been currently evaluated as the project implementation based on some dangerous inspirations taken from the German landscape designs once favoured very much by the Nazi regime (Wolschke-Bulmahn 2001: 283–284).

5.2.3 Honorary Cemeteries

Destruction of the original concentration camp architecture and transformation of the post-camp areas according to the concepts inspired by some sepulchral projects implemented directly after the First World War could be observed in other places too. After the liberation, camp survivors were still dying *en masse*. Uncontrollable epidemics of contagious diseases and emaciation of former prisoners

resulted in extremely high mortality rates among them. For those who died shortly after the liberation, soldiers of the Allied armies established special cemeteries outside the boundaries of the former camps. Frequently, such burials were carried out with the forced assistance of local inhabitants, who had to participate in so-called penal education. Most victims were buried in mass graves, however, whenever it was possible to identify the deceased, they were buried in individual graves. Some graves were set at the sites based on the formula of a war cemetery that had been established after the First World War. One of such inspirations was a Heroes' Grove, a form of a symbolic cemetery dedicated to the fallen soldiers (in German: *Heldenhain*). A popular compositional solution at that time was a space surrounded with a stone wall and covered with rows of simple graves of the same structural form, with trees planted to honour the memory of the soldiers buried there. This form was intended to indicate the proportion of the individual death tragedy against the background of the sacrifice made on a much bigger national scale. Later on, based on that philosophy, the national socialism developed a cult emphasizing the continuity between the glorious past and the promise of better future (Mosse 1979). Creating the landscape architecture based on conceptual solutions related to gardens, parks and cemeteries established at that time was a part of developing the identity of a new German state. The Nazi regime favoured sites that referred to the characteristics of the homeland landscape. Greenery plantings incorporated species representing native flora and irregular wild-like plantings were generally avoided (Wolschke-Bulmahn 2001: 298). In the Third Reich, the art of gardening was an important question that facilitated the propaganda approach toward the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Germany. It came as a physical visualisation of the national socialism aspirations (Małczyński 2015: 63). These traditions were echoed in the way of developing concepts for cemetery sites that appeared directly after the Second World War in the vicinity of the former concentration camps. Honorary cemeteries (in German: *KZ-Ehrenfriedhof*) were established, among other places, in the village of Flossenbürg, at the foot of Scholssberg Hill and at the northern boundaries of the KL Dachau, on Leitenberg Hill. In Buchenwald, a cemetery located on Ettersberg Hill after the war was given the name of *Ehrenhain* to make references to its sepulchral function and to metaphorically indicate that the victims of the KL Buchenwald were heroes – implying heroes fallen in the fight against fascism, according to the historical policy pursued by the communist authorities at that time (Knigge 2000: 14).

Understood as derivatives of the concepts related to war cemeteries established after the First World War, spatial solutions were also applied in the architectural setting provided to some mass graves in the liberated concentration camps located in the vicinity of the French and German borders. In France, burying soldiers who had died on the fronts of the Great War was an extremely sensitive question for the entire society. Demands for exhuming the fallen soldiers' bodies and bringing them back home for proper individual burials were commonly supported. As a result of such social demands, almost 300 000 French soldiers (about 40 % of the identified bodies) were buried in their hometowns (Winter 2014: 26) by 1922. Other deceased soldiers were buried in mass graves established on the former battlefields. The process of developing spatial layouts of those necropolises was supervised by the Imperial War Graves Commission appointed in 1917 in England. The main theme that was often referred to at that time was an empty grave. Edwin Lutyens, an English architect and a designer of several monuments dedicated to the heroes of the First World War, designed the famous Cenotaph, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, that was unveiled in 1920 at Whitehall Street in London. This form was later on disseminated in other countries and the empty grave became a characteristic element of the monumental art dedicated to victims of the First World War. It appeared as the main accentuation in the composition of major military cemeteries (over one thousand graves or commemorated deceased). Edwin Lutyens designed it as a simple stone block with an inscription: *Their Name Liveth for Evermore*. At the opposite point of the compositional axis of a war cemetery, the Stone of Remembrance is usually accompanied by the Cross of Sacrifice, a form designed by Reginald Blomfield. Between these elements, a field of evenly distributed, identical crosses or tombstones spreads out. Observed at dozens of war cemeteries located in the former battlefields of the First World War, the same design was also applied in its simplified form in the areas of the former concentration camps, which were situated within the French borders or within the German occupation zone under the French authorities after the end of the Second World War. A necropolis based on the discussed spatial layout is the final resting place for prisoners who died in the KL Natzweiler and the KL Hinzert. Arranged in rhythmic rows, the graves are marked with bright crosses of the same design. The element that dominates over the necropolis is the monument and the commemoration cross, standing on the same axis. The inspiration based on commemorative art stemming from the concept of war cemeteries established after the First World War can be also traced in the form of the first central monument to all the victims of the KL Mauthausen erected in 1949 at the place of the former roll call square. In terms of its shape and size, a simple stone block with a Latin inscription: *Mortuorum sorte discant viventes* (*The fate of the deceased is a lesson for the living*) refers to the symbolism of the empty grave represented by the Stone of Remembrance three decades before.

5.2.4. Grave Exhumation and Establishment of Symbolic Cemeteries

Some graves of the Nazi concentration camp victims were located far beyond the boundaries of the KL units where prisoners had been incarcerated. The situation resulted from the fact that hundreds of prisoners had died during dreadful mass transports organised by the SS to relocate people to other camps. Some graves that had appeared along the routes connecting the main KL units had been marked and after the war the bodies were moved to the cemeteries established at the monumental sites in the post-camp areas. In the years 1957 – 1960, the Bavarian authorities arranged exhumation of prisoners who had lost their lives along the routes of death marches. They were buried at a symbolic cemetery established in the eastern part of the former KL Flossenbürg, at the place of the former disinfection facility. A similar situation occurred in the former KL Mauthausen, where a cemetery was established at a place where one of the prison blocks used to be located. It became the final resting place for the bodies exhumed from the sub-camps and other Nazi execution sites that were located within the post-war Austrian borders.

Removing the remains of concentration camp victims has always been a controversial question. The protests against exhumation of victims' bodies have been particularly strongly expressed by Jewish communities. They stem from one of the most important principles of Judaism referring to the integrity of the grave. According to Michael Schudrich, who has been holding the position of the Chief Rabbi of Poland since 2004, after the body has been buried, it is forbidden to disturb the grave, as it metaphorically belongs to the dead (Schudrich 2015: 79). This interpretation of the Jewish law and religion is translated into the way of arranging necropolises established in the areas of the former concentration camps and execution sites, where most victims of the Nazi extermination programme were Jewish people. In Bergen-Belsen, the Jewish community members were given an opportunity to ensure that the victims' bodies were not exhumed after the liberation of the camp (Wolschke-Bulmahn 2001: 296). In Bełżec, the discussed principle was respected after the rearrangement of the monumental site at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. Before the commencement of the construction work on the development of a new architectural setting for the site, the rabbinic supervision was established. The Chief Rabbi of Poland blessed the design of the new monument construction and several specially appointed representatives of the Jewish communities were granted the right to monitor the construction process and to stop it if there had been any risk of violating the principles of the Jewish law. In order to secure the remains resting in the mass graves, most parts of the area dedicated to the new commemoration site were covered with geotextile and layers of sand with the drainage systems. All the earthwork was carried out outside the location of the mass graves which was confirmed on an ongoing basis with the use of modern methods applied in non-invasive archaeology. According to Andrew Baker (2015), due to that careful process of securing the graves, the monumental site of Bełżec was constructed with the most complete and comprehensive protection of the mass graves.

5.2.5 A Reliquary - a Monumental Architectural Framework as the Protection of the Ashes

The earth covering the post-camp areas is also particularly respected. Considering the barbaric treatment of human ashes taken out of crematorium furnaces, places of their disposal often remain unknown. Therefore, the entire areas of the former camps are designated as the sacrum zones. The soil collected around the crematoria has been granted the relic status. During the operation of the KL Lublin, a group of prisoners secretly collected the ashes of their inmates scattered around the crematorium furnaces and put them into a tin can that was later on installed in a column topped with a sculpture depicting three eagles. The column had been made upon the order of the SS garrison members as a decorative element of the camp. For the prisoners, the artefact became a symbol of the rebellion and the first physical proof commemorating the tragic fate of their companions.

After the war, the soil mixed with human ashes was collected and piled in burial mounds, barrows and pyramids. In Flossenbürg, the remains of deceased prisoners were put into a burial mound that later on became the main compositional element of the Valley of the Death. In Dachau, the urns filled with ashes found in the crematorium were buried in the mass graves located in the vicinity of the crematorium building. At Majdanek, local residents formed a pyramid that consisted of 1300 m^3 of soil mixed with the remains of the victims who had been killed in the KL Lublin. For a long time, the pyramid was a central point of the commemoration site. In 1955, an urn with the camp earth mixed with the ashes brought from other concentration camps was placed in the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau (Rawecka and Rawecki, 1997: 15).

The lack of a possibility to identify the final resting places of the loved ones resulted in numerous initiatives of establishing symbolic graves at cemeteries on the entire European continent. In a symbolic gesture, the soil brought from various execution places was moved to places located far away from the concentration camps. Symbolic tombstones were set mainly to establish central commemoration sites hon-

ouring victims of the Nazi terror. While leaving the KL Buchenwald, some surviving former prisoners took nineteen urns that were later on placed, among other locations, at the Central Cemetery in Vienna, in the foundations of the Monument to the Martyrs of the Deportation in Paris and at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Copenhagen (Marcuse 2010a: 56-57). In 1949, a monument commemorating victims of the Nazi persecution was established in Hamburg-Ohlsdorf (in German: *Gedenkstätte für die Opfer nationalsozialistischer Verfolgung*), where 105 urns filled with the soil collected at the main KL units were placed. The symbolic graves dedicated to French citizens who had been killed in various concentration camps were also established at the cemetery of Père-Lachaise in Paris. A number of individual monuments were erected to honour victims who had died in the KL Sachsenhausen, the KL Buchenwald, the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau and its sub-camp Auschwitz III-Monowitz, in the KL Ravensbruck, the KL Neuengamme, the KL Mauthausen, the KL Flossenburg, the KL Natzweiler-Struthof, the KL Dachau, the KL Bergen-Belsen and many others.

In the areas of the former concentration camps, large-size urns filled with human ashes were often central elements in the composition of the monumental sites established at those locations. An urn came as a parable of a reliquary – an object known since the medieval times in the Christian culture. It was used as an artefact for keeping relics – the remains of people considered to be saints and items directly related to them. Undoubtedly, a reliquary came as an inspiration to Wiktor Tołkin who designed the monumental sites in Lublin and Sztutowo. The monumental architectural forms holding the ashes of murdered prisoners are the key elements in the composition of both the above-mentioned sites and they come as the symbolic accentuation points commemorating the camp victims. At Majdanek, a massive reinforced concrete urn is protected by an enormous dome, created to resemble the Roman Pantheon. In the area of the former KL Stutthof, the soil mixed with human ashes is placed in a niche inside a horizontal bipartite body of the monumental sculpture. Unveiled in 1958 in the area of the former KL Gross-Rosen, a monument designed by Adam Procki also takes the form of a reliquary. Its foundations cover the urns holding the soil mixed with human ashes.

Monumental architectural setting has also been provided to the mass graves located on the slope of Ettersberg Hill, near the KL Buchenwald. Shortly before the liberation, according the guidelines they had obtained, the SS garrison members ordered prisoners to bury the bodies of the deceased inmates in the natural hollows that could be found in the vicinity. In 1958, during the implementation of the monumental site designed by the Brigade Makarenko, a group of artists, each of three mass graves in the camp was enclosed by a circular arcade wall, resembling the Colosseum. To reach the mass graves, visitors follow a road consisting of several elements, where sublime architectural solutions have been applied.

In numerous cases, a mass grave has become the most important compositional element of large-scale monumental sites. The architectural setting of the final resting places made monumental sites carry an additional layer of sacralisation. The tendency to create commemoration sites with the use of formal means analogical to those applied for creating sacred religious spaces has already become a common trend in monumental art dedicated to the sites of mass extermination from the time of the Second World War (Kuryłowicz 2007: 199). Hence, the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps have been provided with spatial compositions featuring both monumental and sepulchral characteristics of art.

5.2.6 Sacral Objects and Sites of Universal Contemplation

The location of graves in the established monumental sites often makes remembrance places acquire the characteristics of sacral facilities. While participating in the commemorative process, visitors partially assume the role of pilgrims. At the moment of passing through the entrance of a former concentration camp, visitors become participants of a pilgrimage leading through exhibitions arranged in some reconstructed prisoner barracks and crematoria to a square, where an enormous monument-reliquary is situated. In a landscape marked with tragedy, a space has been designated to perform a commemorative function. This fact provides it with the status of a sacral zone (Blair et al., 1991) and – in semantic terms - places it between commemorative and sepulchral art. Hence, next to the elements referring to the marking of a necropolis and monuments that honour victims of the genocide, sacral facilities, chapels and temples, have been also constructed in the post-camp areas. Among the inscriptions put on sculptural installations, it is possible to observe elements referring to religious traditions, related mainly to Christianism and Judaism, such as crosses, menorahs and stars of David. Various types of inscriptions include quotations from the Bible, for example a line from the Book of Job: O *Earth*, *do not cover my blood*, *let there be no resting place for my outcry,* (Hi 16, 18). The quotation was put on the column in Bergen-Belsen in 1946 and on the wall in the Ochel Niche in Bełżec in 2004.

The Christian characteristics can be also found in the commemoration sites established in the area of the former concentration camps, sub-camps and routes of death marches in the German land of Bavaria (Skriebeleit 2011). The first temple ever established in the history of

camp transformations was a Christian chapel of Jesus in Prison, built in the area of the former KL Flossenbürg in 1947. The initiators of that project were some Polish prisoners who had been staying in the camp that was transformed in a DP camp after the liberation. The chapel was a part of the spatial layout of a necropolis referred to as the Valley of Death. It was established by the former prisoners just outside the camp walls.

In the former KL Dachau, the religions of prisoners and victims of the concentration camp were individually honoured. In the late 1960s, at the end of the central axis of the historical urban layout of the camp, three objects were constructed to represent three religions: Catholicism, Evangelicalism and Judaism. This architectural triptych (Hoffmann 1998: 74), along with an Orthodox church added in 1995, comes as the strongest religious manifestation in the areas of the former concentration camps. There are not any other places related to the operation of concentration camps where similarly conspicuous and pronounced sacral facilities can be found. At present, any religious symbol placed in the areas of the former camps immediately triggers protests expressed by associations of former prisoners who represent other religions. The intensity of emotions and controversies around marking the post-camp space with religious symbols has been proved by the events related to the papal cross erected in the gravel pit outside the wall of the former KL Auschwitz I-Stammlager (Raweccy 1997; Zubrzycki 2012). To avoid any other similar social tension and to create a space of universal contemplation, buildings constructed in the post-camp areas were designed as contemplation facilities without any references to the particular religions. In 2000 the House of Silence was built (Haus der Stille) in Bergen-Belsen. In Bełżec, the last room in the museum building constructed at the Memorial Site is the Contemplation Hall.

5.2.7 Symbolic Identification of Murdered Prisoners

After the war, despite considerable efforts made by former prisoners to honour their deceased companions with a proper burial, mass graves had remained unmarked and unsecured for many years. It particularly referred to nameless cemeteries left after the genocidal operations carried out in the extermination camps. In Bełżec and in Treblinka, several years after the war, the mass graves were still devastated and desecrated by grave robbers looking for valuables. Activities aimed at preventing such atrocities were undertaken at the end of the 1950s, during the preparation work for the implementation of the monumental sites (Rusiniak 2008; Kuwałek 2010).

In Treblinka, the designers of the monumental site, Franciszek Duszeńko and Adam Haupt, took proper care of securing the mass graves to prevent the final resting places of the mass extermination victims from being desecrated again. Three fields, where the mass graves had been discovered, were covered with concrete slabs, in which granite rocks were incorporated. Today, 17 000 shattered rocks symbolise not only people who were killed there but also numerous cemeteries, including Jewish ones, that have never been established and graves that have never been marked. The symbolic tombstones do not bear any inscriptions with individual names. A humble attempt made at the identification of victims presents names of towns and villages from where mass transports of prisoners had arrived to Treblinka. The only inscription with an individual name added after the unveiling of the monument is dedicated to Janusz Korczak (Henryk Goldszmit), a respected pedagogue, who had voluntarily accompanied and died with the children entrusted into his care.

Necropolises established in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps, particularly those that were established after mass extermination operations, are formally different from traditional cemeteries, because it is impossible to identify people buried there. Having annihilated their victims, the killers paid special attention to annihilate their identity as well. Fragmentary pieces of information about the places from where mass transports once arrived are not enough to mark graves with any individual names. Despite intense scientific research, the numbers of victims buried in mass graves remain a mystery. The lack of plates with inscriptions honouring individual people is painful, as there is no symbolic sign of connection to an individual person for whom prayers are to be offered.

In an attempt at protesting against the intentional anonymity imposed by the Nazi perpetrators on their victims, some marks of symbolic identification of the deceased have been placed at the monumental sites of commemoration. The graves have been marked based on the information that allows victims to be partially identified. At the commemoration site in Treblinka, the rocks covering the mass graves have been marked with the names of the countries and towns from which mass transports of Jewish prisoners once came to the camp. The names of the communities where victims of mass extermination came from were also exposed at the monumental site in Bełżec. Additionally, the names of people who were most probably murdered in the camp have been placed on the wall of the underground niche.

As common experience of the post-war generation, the impossibility of identifying the final resting places of the loved ones resulted in a phenomenon defined by James E. Young (2004: 267) as *the syndrome of the missing tomb*. In an attempt to cope with it, some people used to hang epitaph plates on the walls of existing cemeteries in Europe. Similar activities have been undertaken at the Jewish

cemetery in Łódź, at Bracka Street. Victims' families and various social groups have founded commemorative plaques individually honouring the deceased at numerous commemorative sites established in the areas of the former concentration camps. In Bergen-Belsen, next to the mass grave with an inscription: *Hier ruhen 2300 tote. April 1945* (*Here rest 2300 murdered people. April 1945*), some symbolic tombstones have been set to honour those whose families know that they died at this particular camp. Among the Jewish tombstones, there is one with an inscription dedicated to the memory of Anne Frank and her sister Margot. In Chełmno, a 30-meter long Wall of Remembrance was unveiled in 1990 to commemorate Jewish prisoners murdered in the camp during the years 1941-1945, where the victims' families may install commemorative plaques. In the wall, a symbolic gate is made, above which an inscription in Hebrew reads: *This is the gate through which only the righteous shall pass*.

The cemeteries at the Nazi camps are elusive to any definitions. They usually form spaces that are not defined with any specific boundaries, considering the impossibility of indicating most places of victims' final rest. Despite attempts at referring to sepulchral art, architectural transformations that have been carried out for decades result in the fact that the final resting places of the Nazi terror victims are most often identified as monuments rather than necropolises. In the social awareness, they function at the verge between collective and individual memory.

5.3 Evidence

5.3.1 The Significance of Ruins

The scale of the genocide committed in the Nazi concentration camps has certainly exceeded all the previous experience of human civilisation. It has proved the existence of the dark side of human nature that – when left uncontrolled – may lead to genocide counted in millions of victims and carried out with industrial efficiency. The original architecture of concentration camps proved the industrial character of the Nazi terror and the system of mass killing. It came as physical evidence of the real traumatic past and for that reason some parts of the facilities in the former system of the KL units were secured as the architectural *corpus delicti*. It required undertaking of multi-aspect activities in the time when the stabilisation after the war chaos was partially restored. The activities pertained only to some parts of the former units of the Nazi KL system and referred to some already reduced constructional structures. In the area of the former units of the concentration camp system, where the post-war administration decided to preserve the original buildings as proofs of the tragic fate of those sites, three main concepts were applied, namely: conservation of the original architecture as the physical proof, its reconstruction and conventional marking of the historical topography.

Contrary to the idea of preserving the physical traces of the concentration camps as proofs, another concept was developed, based on an assumption that the painful past should be left behind. Architectural transformations that were implemented in accordance with the latter idea led to the destruction of the buildings or their partial deterioration with the complete obliteration of their former spatial structure. It occurred also when the facilities of the former camps were adapted to new utilitarian functions (as for example, housing estates in Gusen and in Flossenbürg, a prison in Neuengamme and military barracks in Ravensbrück), with their historical infrastructure reconstructed and adjusted to new requirements.

People who were fighting the hardest to preserve the original camp architecture were camp survivors. Some former prisoners strongly affected the process of commemorating the history of the former concentration camps through securing historical artefacts related to those sites (Kitowska-Łysiak 2009). However, they did not represent the group that could ultimately affect decisions made by the administration authorities of the post-camp areas after the war (Wachsmann 2015: 621). The fact that today only very little original architecture directly related to the operation of the concentration camps has been preserved was decided for pragmatic, political and economic reasons during the first years after the war (Olesiuk 2011).

Today, the struggle to preserve historical buildings of the former concentration camps gives rise to conflicting emotions. Some scientists (Young 1993: 119–154; Vergo 2008: 22) emphasize the significance of the ruins and the amazing power of impact exerted by the artefacts preserved at Auschwitz that cannot be replaced by any other means of communication. It would be hard to find any other manifestations of artistic expression that could convey the scale of the terror inflicted on prisoners of the KL units better than the large-scale panorama of the remains of the barracks in Birkenau or the original construction structure of the prison and the crematorium in Auschwitz I. Surviving to our times, the historical topography and the specific character of the architecture directly referring to the industrial precision of the 1930s allow visitors to realise the civilisational context of the genocide committed in the camps (Hoffmann 1997: 17; Winskowski 2011: 99–114). Primo Levi (1994: 185), a former prisoner of Auschiwtz also supports constant maintenance of the artefacts from the past. He believes that in the space, which is indescribable with words that are used for describing everyday life, in particular, life in the society living in the reality dominated by the visual signs, the sight of the relics from the

past is a way to convey a very difficult message. Detlef Hoffmann (1997) writes about the memory of objects (in German: *Gedächtnis der Dinge*), in the context of the significance of preserving the historical facilities not only as proofs of the genocidal processes, but also as objects required to achieve a more readable commemoration process.

The question of maintaining the original architecture of the former extermination sites also generates negative opinions. In this respect, the most frequently commented remembrance site is the former KL Auschwitz. The strongest criticism refers to its spatial development that is based on the constant maintenance of its buildings, their renovation and reconstruction. Transformed into commemoration sites and museums, the post-camp areas have become a subject to *a profound paradox – their maintenance aimed at preservation of their original character unavoidably leads to its loss* (Assmann 2013: 175–176). Each activity undertaken to maintain the original facility means its partial modification and its gradual loss.

Some objections to the concept of preserving relics of the camp realness actually refer to its unreality while facing the current spatial situation. The reconstructed camp infrastructure will never provide a full picture of the situation from the past. James E. Young (1993: 128) believes that this is because the ruins have been prepared and preserved by conservators, in accordance with the interpretation of curators who follow one of the numerous interpretations of the history. Preserving the original character is also prevented by the urban tissue of the villages and towns growing outside the camp walls. In the background of the contemporary housing estates, the historical camp buildings become considerably detached from the former spatial landscape in terms of the context. Architectural layers and tourist infrastructure in the post-camp areas allow visitors to become more aware of the current reality than of the historical context (Vergo 2008: 22; Young 2009). Such an impression has been partially compensated in the commemoration site in Brzezinka. In 1962, a protection zone was established around the museum area in order to prevent dense development (Rawecki 2003: 29–30).

Related to the arrangement of the former extermination sites after the end of the war, similar questions were often discussed by prisoners as early as during the time of their imprisonment in the camp. As Wiktor Tołkin, the designer of the monumental sites at Majdanek and Sztutowo, recalls, the hope that one day the camp space would stop functioning as an instrument of genocide kept prisoners alive (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010; Howorus-Czajka 2012: 54). At that time, preserving the original character of the camp was not a priority solution. Most concepts developed at that time assumed that the original architecture of the concentration camp should have been destroyed and replaced with natural environment or a monumental site. Primo Levi (1994: 185) admits that if he had been asked to select a spatial solution for Auschwitz directly after its liberation, he would have opted for the complete liquidation of the camp infrastructure. However, later reflections resulted in his change of mind in this matter – years later, the writer became an ardent supporter of preserving the historical artefacts as proofs of the genocide committed by the Nazis.

Prisoners often identified the original camp architecture with a monument. A former prisoner, Seweryna Szmaglewska observes: *The camp itself is a basic monument. So is the museum, with all the collected documents that come as the most incriminating act of indictment and all the proofs preserved in the area of Oświęcim and Brzezinka, testifying to the truth… Considering the level of the present knowledge, Oświęcim is a book that visitors can read without any footnotes or comments. We are obligated even more to take good care of that book, of the condition of Oświęcim and its hidden extension arranged by the Germans in Birkenau. Oświęcim is still an argument in the discussion that has been taking place in the world. Therefore, it cannot be disturbed* (Szmaglewska 1959; in: Rawecka and Rawecki, 1997: 16). Most former prisoners shared that opinion. Whenever prisoner barracks were demolished, even for some rational reasons, former prisoners who came to visit the place of their tragedy were shocked. They interpreted the demolition of the post-camp facilities as an activity aimed at obliterating traces of the crimes committed in the camp (Wiedemann 2008: 41). In such situations, former prisoners protested by filing petitions for reconstructing barracks and restoring the former urban layout instead of establishing monumental forms of commemoration. It occurred in 1950s in Buchenwald and in Sachsenhausen (Marcuse 2010c: 78). Detlef Hoffmann (1997: 17) compares the activities aimed at removing the historical camp architecture in favour of artistic transformations of the landscape to the *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory) – a procedure that sentences the past for oblivion.

Preserving the original structure of the camps, their architecture and facilities turned out to be a difficult task to implement. Some buildings were destroyed during the last months of the operation of the camps, particularly the eastern KL units, where the SS garrison members, who had been well aware of the approaching front, did not pay much attention to the order at the camp premises and the technical condition of the buildings was gradually deteriorating. The facilities of critical significance that constituted the proof of the genocidal actions carried out in the camp, such as gas chambers, crematoria and archives, were burnt down and destroyed. The on-going war operations also contributed to the irreversible destruction of architectural camp objects. In the night of 11th and 12th May 1944, about ten buildings in the area of the SS barracks were damaged at Majdanek as a result of a bombing raid (Olesiuk 2011: 230).

In most cases, the post-war fate of the camp buildings was decided during the first decade after the liberation. Preserving the original architecture of the concentration camps was a difficult technical task that required considerable funds. Hence, the decision about liquidation of some buildings was often made on the basis of rational assessment, in relation to the difficult context of post-war Europe. The construction material obtained from the demolition of post-camp facilities was then used for reconstruction of buildings damaged during the war, both in Germany and in Poland. Prisoner barracks in a good technical condition were moved to other places to be used as residential buildings in the regions where the destruction after the war was particularly heavy. It occurred in the former KL Mittelbau-Dora, the KL Stutthof and the KL Buchenwald. Economic aspects related to the maintenance of the infrastructure were taken into consideration also in the former KL Natzweiler, where the associations of former prisoners eventually agreed to remove the barracks.

The representatives of the administration of the post-camp areas realised that the costs of maintaining the camp infrastructure would constantly grow. Moreover, they also knew that in order to ensure the safe use of some elements of the original constructional structures, those elements needed replacement for proper maintenance in the future. Technical difficulties in the preservation of the original buildings resulted mainly from the low quality of their constructional structure. Most buildings, such as prisoner barracks in particular, had been intended as temporary facilities. For example, in the KL Dachau, the buildings had been constructed according to Himmler's guidelines, for 10 or 15 years, so that they could survive the war (Marcuse 2005: 134). The infrastructure of the concentration camps located next to quarries and brickyards survived in a much better condition. In the KL Mauthausen and the KL Flossenbürg, the SS barracks and watchtowers made of stone have survived in a good shape until the present day.

The post-camp areas could not be fully secured against gradual deterioration even by covering them with state legal protection. During the first years of its operation, the employees of the State Museum at Majdanek could only watch the decline of the post-camp facilities that had been under the military administration for over a year. Driven by financial needs, the museum was forced to sell the wood obtained from the demolition of some buildings considered to be of less historical value (the SS barracks and the commandant headquarters) to various state institutions. In that way, the funds were collected to fulfil the basic aims related to the securing of the post-camp property (Olesiuk 2011). At present, the area of the State Museum at Majdanek covers almost 90 ha, where 71 historical buildings and 86 ruins are located (Kranz 2011: 11).

5.3.2. Demolition of Historical Architecture and Conservational Preservation

A similar process, starting from the demolition of the buildings and ending with the conservation of the ruins, characterises the activities undertaken by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The museum was established at the turn of 1946 and 1947. Similarly to the situation at Majdanek, some destruction of the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau facilities was caused by the fact that they had been used as the facilities of the camp for prisoners of war that had been functioning there from the spring to the winter 1945. During that time, the Soviets dismantled some barracks and the technical equipment of some facilities, including the camp laundry, the butchery, the SS garrison kitchen, the transformer station and the boiler building. Some infrastructure, along with its documentation collected by the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland (Główna Komisja Badania Zbrodni Niemieckich w Polsce), was considered to be the spoil of war and sent to the USSR. The Ministry of Reconstruction decided about further demolition work at the camp premises. Wooden elements and other construction materials obtained from the demolition of the barracks and fences were sent to various towns in Poland as the recycled material for the reconstruction of buildings damaged during the war. In mid-1946, the central authorities decided to preserve 40 wooden barracks as exhibits for the museum that was going to be established at the site. However, the demolition of the barracks was continued and the post-camp area was still looted. In 1947, such activities were eventually put to an end by appointing guards to monitor the post-camp area (Lachendro 2016).

Preserving the authentic character of a concentration camp must be - even to a slight degree - related to the maintenance of its remaining infrastructure. The conservational preservation was implemented at very few areas of the commemoration sites related to the former concentration camps. The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim pursues this strategy with particular attention. For many years, the museum has been following the idea of obtaining the status of the historical document for the post-camp area and the architectural remains. The main effort made to secure the post-war facilities took place in the area of the main camp of Auschwitz I. The pre-war brick buildings were easier to maintain and they could be adapted for exhibition purposes. It was initially intended to establish a park cemetery in the area of the former Birkenau camp. It would include the camp fence, the ruins of the crematorium and the remains of the burning hollows. Operating without any exhibition functions for a long time, the area of Birkenau was compared to a reserve, where the site was

covered with protection, however, without any conservational intervention and other adaptation activities (Ziębińska-Witek 2006). During the preparations for the implementation of a commemoration site, the securing and reconstructive work was started in the post-camp area on an on-going basis. During the 1950s, the renovation of the brick barracks was implemented and 20 wooden barracks were set on the site. They were reconstructed of the material obtained from the demolition of other original buildings. The first long-term conservation plan was developed in 1957, after the establishing of the boundaries of the museum premises. Based on the guidelines stated in the plan, the subsequent functional buildings of the former camp were covered by conservational renovation, including the watchtowers (some of them were reconstructed) and the fence system (the damaged barbed wire and concrete posts were replaced), the foundations of the demolished buildings were marked with concrete frames and the structure of chimneys and vertical heating sections were reinforced. During the construction work on the International Monument to the Victims of the Concentration Camp, the ruins of the gas chambers and the crematoria were secured (Zbrzeska Ed. 2003). Preserving authenticity is the key phrase used by the museum in Oświęcim to refer to the fundamental aim of its activities. The main purpose of the commemoration site established in the area of the former KL Auschwitz is to preserve as many of its original camp buildings as possible. Today, the conservation protection covers 155 real estate objects (including blocks, barracks, post-camp buildings), about 300 ruins and post-camp remains, including the ruins of four gas chambers and crematoria in the former camp of Auschwitz II-Birkenau that are particularly significant to the history of the camp, over 13 km of the camp fences, including 3 600 concrete posts and many other facilities. The area covering almost 200 ha encompasses kilometres of roads, drainage ditches, railway tracks with a siding and an unloading ramp, two sewage treatment plants, fire-fighting pools, etc. The historical and post-war green vegetation and trees also undergo constant maintenance treatment (http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/konserwacja/). Long-term activities undertaken to protect architectural remains of the extermination site were supported by an international body – in 1979, the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau was entered into the Register of the World Heritage Sites UNESCO.

In other museums established in the areas of the former concentration camps, where very few original facilities have survived to the present day, each historical constructional facility is treated with some particular reverence. It refers to the surviving, unchanged historical painting layers, mosaics, fixtures and fittings, such as toilets, lavatories, autopsy tables. In some barracks and functional buildings special glass panels have been installed over the original flooring. The original flooring has been secured with glass platforms in the barracks of the former KL Sachsenhausen and in the camp bath in the former KL Flossenbürg. The glass panels protect the historical surface but they do not hide it. They emphasize not so much its physical value but rather the metaphorical connotations referring to the past events. The similar protection has been also provided to the historical flooring of the former sauna building in the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. The designers of the concept for the adaptation of the facility for a historical exhibition have considered the flooring to be the most valuable element of the historical constructional structure, because *it comes as a touching document that somehow preserves the traces of great numbers of people who had used it for passing into non-existence. Indeed, the flooring is a silent witness of a dreadful process, the quintessence of the path of ordeal* (Niessner 2001: 180 in: Ziębińska-Witek 2006).

5.3.3. Staging Authenticity

In the 21st century, the process of preserving the original post-camp architecture has been carried out along with reconstructing its demolished fragments. They appear as the secondary structures, recreated in response to a social need of recalling the past through physical artefacts. Marian Golka (2009) defines them as *memory implants* that are created as a result of the sense of emptiness, nostalgia or a need of revenge. Demolished during the first post-war decade, the barracks returned to the areas of the former concentration camps as the reconstructed objects. In the former KL Dachau, two reconstructed wooden barracks are situated to the north of the historical roll call square. They have been reconstructed without the adequacy to the historical reality – the facades of the original barracks were not so aesthetically painted, they did not have such solid foundations and the window frame woodwork was not so airtight (Marcus 2005: 135).

The current renovation of the constructional structure of the architectural monuments has been also the subject to criticism. The sterile aesthetics of nicely painted barracks obliterates the memories of dreadful conditions from the times when the camp was in operation. Bertrand Perz states that the impeccability of the recently renovated buildings of the former KL Mauthausen can be associated with the sterile architecture of a health resort rather than with a traumatic extermination site (2016: 38).

"Staging authenticity" (Assmann 2013: 175) has been advancing with the growing time distance to the past events. Under the framework of a conservation-construction project under the title of *the Stone Hell KL Gross-Rosen I* carried out in the area of

the monumental site in Rogoźnica in the years 2009 – 2011, one typical prisoner barrack and one watchtower were reconstructed, among other objects (https://www.gross-rosen.eu/projekty/).

In the ideological opposition to the strategy aimed at the preservation of historical authenticity, a concept of an artistic creation was developed. It provided the original camp structure with an additional level of narration. Numerous monumental sites of the 1960s significantly interfered with the historical space of the former extermination sites, thwarting the understanding of their original urban layouts. The minimisation of the past relics in favour of the artistic representation of the past came as a basic assumption that allowed some new meanings to be created (Knigge 1996: 207 in: Marcuse 2005: 134; Kirsch 2003).

At present, the process of maintaining the post-camp areas as proofs of the past events is carried out starting from the precise conservation treatment, which is similar to the one in an open-air museum, and ending with an artistic representation of the historical structure. A number of concepts referring to the spatial development of the sites resulted in the idea that what has remained of a particular place is unimportant, whereas the way in which it is going to function in the future is truly significant. Jörg Skriebeleit (2016: 122) evaluates current activities related to architectural transformations in the former KL Flossenbürg: in this case, to preserve the proof means to recreate the historical topography of the place.

5.4 A Museum

5.4.1 Post-camp Architecture Adapted for the Purposes of Museum Exhibitions

A direct result of activities undertaken to preserve the original architecture of the Nazi concentration camps, including all the movable exhibits related to those sites, seen as the proofs of the atrocities committed by the Third Reich regime, was the establishment of museums in the post-camp areas. Institutions responsible for the maintenance and exhibition of artefacts related to the operation of the Nazi concentration camps are referred to as martyrdom museums (Kranz 2009). They are distinguished among other historical museums by their location at the direct sites of historical events and immediate reference to the strength of the impact exerted by the realism of the remains.

Located in the post-camp areas, museums were established at different moments after the liberation from the SS authority. The first museum unit arranged in the area of a concentration camp was actually established when war operations were still being carried out in Europe. In November 1944, a temporary body representing the executive authority in the areas liberated from the German occupation in Poland, the Polish Committee of National Liberation, established a museum in the premises of the former KL Lublin that was liberated in July. Three years later, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland adopted the Act on Commemorating the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation and Other Nations at Majdanek, which defined the fundamental statutory objectives of the museum, namely: *collecting evidence and materials of the crimes committed by the Nazis, making them accessible to the society and providing their scientific analysis* (Journal of Laws 1947, art. 3, no. 52, item 266).

Since the beginning of the operation of the institution, the employees of the State Museum at Majdanek had put their best efforts in securing as much of the post-camp area as possible and in collecting documents related to the operation of the former KL Lublin. However, the task was not easy, considering the fact that the former camp was taken over by the military units of the Soviet and Polish armies, limiting maintenance work and contributing to the gradual devastation of the original camp architecture (Wóycicka 2009; Olesiuk 2011). The post-war crisis also contributed to the demolition of the considerable number of the camp buildings, including the barracks. In an attempt made at the preservation of the original facilities, some of them were adapted to serve museum and administrative purposes. In the area of the former KL Lublin, out of over a hundred barracks, six ones were dedicated to perform exhibition purposes and, therefore, they were maintained in a relatively good technical condition. Initially, the post-camp buildings accommodated humble collections gathered by the museum and some exhibitions referring to the history of the camp. The first permanent exhibition was arranged in one of the prisoner barracks in September 1945 (Banach 2014).

Arranged in other martyrdom museums, exhibitions were displayed in prisoner barracks and other functional buildings. They were placed in preserved or reconstructed barracks (and in many cases – they are still placed there in their modified forms) in the areas of the former KL Auschwitz, KL Stutthof and KL Sachsenhausen. One of the first post-war exhibitions was presented in Dachau, upon the initiative of some former prisoners, becoming a central commemoration place in the camp for many years.

The idea of arranging historical exhibitions inside the original buildings is based on the reality of the surviving infrastructure and the preservation of the evidence of the past through the adaptation of the historical buildings to utilitarian purposes. Such forms of displaying exhibitions create *the space of emotions*, where the concept of experiencing the authenticity of the place is more significant than conveying the factual message (Ziębińska- Witek 2006).

Unfortunately, apart from the obvious advantage resulting from the context of the original spatial structure, museum exhibitions placed in barracks are highly exposed to destruction, considering the high risk of fire that can devastate the original structure of the buildings and their equipment. In 1992, some members of a neo-Nazi movement set fire in the premises of the former KL Sachsenhausen. The barracks housing the exhibition on the fate of Jewish prisoners in the camp were partially burnt. The fire also caused some loss in the collection of the State Museum at Majdanek. In 2010, in one of the reconstructed barracks of the former KL Lublin a fire broke out and destroyed most of the barrack constructional structure and the exhibits collected inside – several thousand pairs of shoes that were stolen by the Nazis from prisoners of Majdanek and victims of the *Reinhardt* action.

Objective by assumption, historical exhibitions are not objective at all and they will probably never be. An exhibition creates a vision of the past through which it permanently forms historical awareness (Zabłocka-Kos 2013: 82). In substantive terms, early museum exhibitions arranged in post-camp buildings significantly represented policies pursued by the countries responsible for the protection of the former extermination sites. Established in 1947, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim also became an arena of historical policy games. The first exhibitions were arranged in the brick buildings of the KL Auschwitz I-Stammlager. Along with the development of the exhibition, the subsequent prisoner blocks were adapted to the museum purposes. As James E. Young (2009: 52) believes, although during the first decades the exhibitions were related to the policy pursued by the communist regime, they were later on systematically modified and completed along with the political transformations in Poland and in the world. Starting in the 1960s, in the area of the museum, the so-called national exhibitions were successively opened. They presented the history of prisoners transported to the camp from the particular European countries. The first exhibitions referred to Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Russia, Germany, Yugoslavia, Belgium and Denmark. During the 1970s the Bulgarian, Austrian and French exhibitions were arranged and in the 1980s the Dutch, Italian and Polish exhibitions were added. In 2001, an exhibition was dedicated to the Roma victims of the KL Auschwitz. In 2013, the first version of the Shoah exhibition from 1968 was modernised. Organisations from the particular countries were responsible for the arrangement of the exhibitions in terms of their content and aesthetics. Some exhibitions represented highly innovative ways of presentation in terms of their artistic quality (Galliani 2014). Today, the analysis of the history of the exhibitions organised in Oświęcim comes as a rich source of information on transformations in the historical policy shaped after the end of the Second World War in Poland and in the world.

5.4.2 Historical Artefacts as the Last Witnesses

One of the most touching exhibitions arranged in the premises of the museum in Oświęcim is *The Evidence of Crime*, where personal items stolen from prisoners are presented. The numbers of movable exhibits in the collections of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum are estimated as follows: 110 000 shoes, 3 800 suitcases, 12 000 pots, 470 prostheses, 350 pieces of prisoner clothes, 250 tallits (Jewish prayer shawls) (http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/konserwacja/). Some of these objects are displayed on permanent exhibitions, whereas others are kept in the museum archives under specialist conservation care. The artefacts of the similarly tragic past are also parts of the collections at the State Museum at Majdanek and the Stutthof Museum. Referred to as the last witnesses, these objects allow visitors to visualise the specificity of everyday terror at the concentration camp and mass extermination carried out there. The original urban layout of the camp, its architecture and the realism of the items that once belonged to the murdered prisoners are to reinforce the potential of the visualisation of the landscape shaped by the past terror. Today, those exhibits contribute to the concept of preserving the authenticity of the site. Presented in the museum exhibitions, piles of glasses, shoes, prostheses and hair of deceased victims come as the evidence of dehumanisation incorporated by the Third Reich regime into the extermination process. They are also the symbols of deprivation from individuality and anonymity imposed by the Nazis on hundreds of thousands of people who had become victims of racial persecution. The exhibits also come as clear metaphors of the remains of the fallen civilisation (Young 1993: 132) and draw visitors' attention to a metaphorical void created after the mass extermination of Jewish people. Such an interpretation has initiated a metaphorical figure that has inspired further trends in commemorative art that have been developed over the subsequent decades (Williams 2007). A similar parable can be referred to some other commemorative artistic installations, such as the abandoned chairs in the Ghetto Heroes Square in Kraków and the Holocaust Memorial in Budapest, in the form of an installation presenting shoes left on the Danube bank.

Still, presenting personal items that once belonged to victims of the Holocaust, particularly the human remains in display cases, comes as a controversial question that gives rise to numerous doubts of ethical nature (Ziębińska-Witek 2009: 294). The sight of display cases full of human hair, prostheses and glasses generates complicated emotions in visitors. Such exhibits are more meaningful than traditional museum artefacts – they are proofs and catalysers of emotions (Young 1993: 132). They can be also perceived as unintentional objectification of the memory of murdered victims (Arnold-de Simine 2013:

21). Presentation of personal items distorts the image presenting the realism of those who participated in the tragic events in the past, because - as James E. Young observes - *the sum of such fragments will never be able to bring us closer to what was lost* (1993: 132–133).

Other important elements of museum exhibitions that exert a similar impact on the post-camp space, filling it with realism, are historical photographs presenting pictures from the time when the camps were in full operation, their architecture and – first of all – their victims. Their presence grows stronger along with the reinforcement of the characteristics pertaining to collective memory in the second half of the 20th century. It consists in *post-modernist privatisation of the past* that is manifested by the interest in the past of individual people, emphasis and preservation of individual experience and distrust toward some abstract notions related to a collective entity, such as the state (Ankersmit 2004 in: Kwiatkowski 2008: 39). Photographs of people murdered in concentration and extermination camps form important elements of exhibitions presenting the history of mass extermination of Jews and other nations carried out by the Nazi regime. They draw visitors' attention to the testimonies of witnesses and come as a form of symbolic resistance against the namelessness of murdered victims so carefully planned by the genocide perpetrators. *Each recognised photograph deprives the deceased of namelessness and restores their individuality, making it easier for visitors to identify themselves with an individual person – a victim* (Ziębińska-Witek 2006: 17). Presented in the famous Hall of Names in the Israeli Holocaust Museum of Yad Vashem and in the exhibition room in the underground of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, dozens of photographs paved the path to a trend of individualisation of historical exhibitions, which was later on adopted by exhibitions arranged in the post-camp areas. In 2001, a new exhibition was opened in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, in the so-called sauna building that was once used as the camp bath, where prisoners were deprived of their personal items before disinfection and selection. The exhibition presented the tragic history of that facility and one of its most important elements was a wall on which the photographs were displayed. Found in prisoners' baggage, the photographs presented victims themselves, their families and relatives in the times before the Shoah.

Facilitated by photographs, the narration supports the visualisation of the historical topography. Photographs allow collective memory to become refreshed (Sontag 2003) and let the message of museum exhibitions created in the camp open-air space become more readable. They come as the complementation of textual data and implement the task of capturing the authenticity of the site (Klei 2011: 56). Set by an empty railway ramp, a board presenting a historical photograph of a terrified crowd of people pushed out of the cargo railway carriages by the SS soldiers, attributes the ramp with realism. Covered with glass, graphic boards set in the key points of the former camp topography introduce additional narration. They evoke the images of the original architecture that has undergone considerable transformations over the years.

5.4.3 Open-air Exhibition

Open-air exhibitions play an important role in the structure of martyrdom museums (Kranz 2011: 9). Considering the fact that the large areas of the former concentration camps have been incorporated into the museum premises, exhibition techniques must go beyond the interior space of the buildings. Usually, they refer to the landscape scenography that renders the historical topography of the camp by setting boards with photographs at its key points, copies of archival documents and factual descriptions of the history of the camp. Open-air exhibitions also allow visitors to visualise various layers of architectural transformations that have taken place since the liberation of the camp. Over seven decades of demolition of camp buildings, artistic arrangement and adaptation to new utilitarian purposes have resulted in the fact that the historical structure of the former extermination sites is hardly readable for visitors. Three-dimensional models are helpful in imagining the spatial transformations that have taken place over that time. They usually present spatial development of the camps during their full operation time and models of the contemporary layouts of the commemoration sites. Coming as the elements of an open-air exhibition, three-dimensional bronze models have been set in Flossenbürg and Sachsenhausen, allowing visitors to compare the historical and contemporary architectural structure of the former camps.

5.4.4 Architecture of Memories

Over the last two decades of architectural transformations in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps, new facilities have been established in the camp premises to perform exhibition functions. Contemporary martyrdom museums are no longer located in the preserved or reconstructed post-camp buildings. They are based in buildings whose architectural and constructional structure follows modern artistic trends and exhibitions organised there refer to the latest experience of creating a historical display.

In the 21st century, transformations of collective memory have forced the architecture of museum facilities to become adjusted to the expectations of the modern society who is familiar with the events of the Second World War mostly through the media, less often through

the stories told by the eyewitnesses. Paul Williams (2007) believes that *a global drive to commemorate atrocities* has generated a trend of establishing museums where exhibitions present not only the facts from the past but also refer to emotions and feelings in visitors, including them into the commemoration processes. The architecture of contemporary historical museums creates space for spectacular exhibition scenarios that are intended to provide visitors with more experience than just simple familiarisation with the historical artefacts collected by museum employees. The shape of the museum interior becomes an attraction itself, because it leads to the reconstruction of the tragedy during a sensual walk of a kind. Hence, museum buildings perform both displaying and commemorative functions. The dualistic character of museums has been discussed by a number of scientists (Sontag 2003; Williams 2007, Klei 2011; Arnold-de Simine 2013). As a result of research studies on contemporary museology, a new notion has been coined: *memory museums*. It has been suggested by Susan Sontag (2003). The notion refers to museums that present the history of the Holocaust as to *temples of a specific kind, built to house comprehensive, chronological, arranged and illustrated stories about suffering* (Ibid.: 62–63). Paul Williams (2007) suggests that such objects should be referred to as *memorial museums* (2007), extending their role to the carriers of the past that affect visitors' emotional and cognitive spheres. Both notions assume a formal transformation of museums into commemorative objects. However, Bill Niven (2013) presents an opposite argument, stating that architectural projects implemented to perform the role of presenting the history of the Second World War come as the third generation of monuments, where the commemorative function has evolved into direct presentation of historical data. Combi-memorials come as a formula of physical carriers of narration about the past, which is closest to the integration of architecture and monumental art. Combi-memorials come as another evolution, following the trends in contemporary art representing counter-monumental and counter-memorial ideas related to the artistic means that are in opposition to monumentality and the traditional formula of a monument (Young 1993; 1994; 2000a). It has been generally assumed that such objects should encourage visitors to actively participate in the processes of familiarising with the results of scientific research studies, remembering them and commemorating. Such processes are accompanied by the complexity of the architectural forms that introduce additional semantic layers to the museum exhibition. In the 21st century, monuments and museums are formulated as buildings that visitors can enter and sense their interior space in a physical, non-visual way. Initially popularised through sculptural installations representing conceptual art, this concept has been developed into a direction that leads to approaching cubic architecture as a tool of commemorative art. Due to architectural syntax, some solutions leading to *embodied experiences* have been added (Sion 2009). Based on the simulation of experience, educational activities are undertaken on the basis of the current historical policy. As Ernst van Alphen observes, the purpose of such a controversial pedagogical tool is to provide *a brief momentary brush against experience* (2004: 230); however, it is not necessarily helpful in acquiring factual knowledge.

The desire to create a space that can be sensed in an empirical way has diminished the role performed by visual details in the creation of monuments. Less and less often, commemorative objects lead a narration based on symbols developed over centuries of cultural experience. It is indirectly related to the common departure from classical artistic means that refer to the narration rooted deeply in culture. As Jerzy Uścinowicz observes, *today we deal with a crisis of symbols and reluctance toward them in the world of art* (2011: 367).

Gradual redirection of visitors' interest – from passive visiting toward experiencing the space that actually is a narration of the past – began at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. At that time, a popular tool of historical didactics was a concept of bringing site visitors metaphorically closer to the experience of victims persecuted during the Second World War. Since then, traditional exhibition practice has been extended by specially developed experience scenarios. In the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that was opened in 1993, visitors have to pass through claustrophobic tunnels, railway cattle wagons that were used by the Nazis for transportation of victims to the extermination camps. Opened in the same year in Los Angeles, the Beit Hashoah-Museum of Tolerance, refers to the means of physical simulation of experience in the form that has been considered as exaggerated manipulation (Marcuse 2000). The Beit Hashoah significantly differs from conventional museums with the methods applied to present historical facts and their interpretation in the context of contemporary social reality. The most recent solutions of the multi-media technologies have been applied there to attract young people's attention and to control their emotions. The museum uses dioramas, films, interactive installations an computer-controlled exhibits. The biggest doubts, however, refer to the use of the formulas characteristic for TV shows applied by the exhibition designers to communicate and educate visitors. Nicole Lisus and Richard V. Ericson (1995) state that such a concept applied to present historical facts turns the museum into a factory of emotions and functions as a format of control. The effectiveness and appropriateness of attempts made to evoke empathy in visitors can also generate some doubts. *It has been known for a long time that any mimetic attempts at convey-*

ing the experience of prisoners of concentration and extermination camps end with failure. Regardless of the number of facts presented, we are not able to get any closer to that traumatic experience once shared by thousands of people (Ziębińska-Witek 2006: 18).

Formulated by museology specialists, such charges have affected the subsequently implemented museum projects dedicated to the Holocaust. The impact of exhibitions has become more neutral and more attention has been drawn to the architectural creation of the experience scenography. A breakthrough project implemented in the discussed field was the expansion of the Jewish Museum in Berlin in 2001. The building was designed by Daniel Libeskind, an architect, who called his project *Between the Lines*. On the basis of the multi-layered semantics, he designed a building that follows a convention very different from then traditional museum architecture. The building is intended to give an impulse to discover memory of the past. Created by Libeskind, the space requires visitors to become intellectually and emotionally involved. The architectural layout affects human psyche and generates anxiety, the sense of threat and confusion. In terms of structure, it opposes the paradigm of a constructional object – there is no entrance zone defined, material solutions applied in facades do not allow visitors to understand the internal structure of the building. The system of circulation routes and passageways between the particular functional zones makes visitors feel disoriented and confused. The levels of the floors and vertical lines of the walls deviate significantly from the generally accepted ergonomic standards. The museum interior forms an environment where visitors cannot feel comfortable. In this way, visitors are forced to become more sensitive to the exhibits displayed there. Today, the Jewish Museum in Berlin is often referred to as an icon of modern architecture, however its formula has also been criticised. The main objection to the museum building pertains to the strong impact it exerts on visitors, namely: its overwhelming expression that does not allow the museum exhibition to function on the equal terms in the same space. Despite that aspect, Libeskind's concept to create a monument in the cubic form has paved the way to the architectural narration of the past for other museum projects implemented as a complementation to already existing monumental sites in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps.

Museum units established today continue the tradition of martyrdom museums established several decades ago, however, their headquarters are built outside the areas related to the direct historical functioning of the former camps. This comes as the manifestation of care taken of the inviolability and integrity of the sacrum zone that is a necropolis. Modern cubic facilities may cross the boundaries of the former camp only in a symbolic way – as it occurs in Bergen-Belsen, where the longitudinal body of the museum building extends over the defined boundary of the commemoration site by the means of a suspension structure with a viewing platform.

The traumatic power of the historical context of the post-camp areas is also the reason for a humbler formula of buildings constructed in their vicinity. Referred to as *Nichtarchitektur* in German publications (Zschokke 2004), background architecture is supposed to perform an introductory role for the post-camp areas and to implement the concept of the background without any violation of the dramatic spirit of the commemoration sites. In the spatial layout, they form symbolic entrance gates without imposing any sequence of a visit paid to a commemoration site and a museum.

The architecture represented by a museum building designed by the KSP Engel und Zimmermann Architekten studio (Ballhausen 2007: 38) and constructed in 2007 in Bergen-Belsen is referred to as monumental minimalism. Restrained in its style, the architectural object is respectably integrated with the traumatic space and provides a highly aesthetic setting to the exhibits displayed inside. Similar architectural means have been applied in Bełżec. Constructed simultaneously with the commemoration site, the exhibition building was designed by the DDJM architecture studio. Today, it comes as the background to the expressive sculptural narratives forming the apocalyptic landscape.

Another design solution based on the similar assumptions is the location of a museum building below the level of the post-camp area, inside a hill slope or at the foot of a hill where a commemoration site is located. An example of this rare type of architectural objects is the Visitor Centre building in the former KL Mauthausen, designed by Herwig Mayer, Karl Peyrer-Heimstätt and Christoph Schwarz. The building is located below the historical walls of the main part of the former camp. The only part of the building visible in the public space is its front façade, through which several crevices lead visitors inside. A similar solution has been applied in the museum building constructed in the area of the former KL Buchenwald. Accommodating the exhibition on the post-war history of the Soviet special camp located at the site, the building is situated in a slope of an escarpment near the boundaries of the former camp. The entrance zone is formed as a minimalistic concrete wall with an accentuated glass surface.

The aesthetics of the new martyrdom museums is, by assumption, fundamentally different from the characteristics of the historical architecture of the former extermination sites. The assumed difference is implemented by the use of modern façade materials that do not refer to any wooden and brick post-camp buildings. Designers refer to the tragic context of the sites by using materials that provide buildings with an apocalyptic character. The material frequently applied in the

architecture of modern museum buildings is corten – steel intentionally covered with a rusty coating. In the areas of the former concentration camps, corten panels have been applied, among others, in Hinzert to cover the broken shape of the exhibition building. It was designed by the Wandel Lorch Architekten studio and constructed in 2005. Corten panels were also used for the construction of a simple building accommodating the museum of the history of the Soviet special camp that was opened in 2001 in the area of the former KL Sachsenhausen.

Creating the atmosphere of a post-apocalyptic landscape is also fostered by the use of reinforced concrete structures. Concrete has been applied as facade material most characteristic to the architecture of the camp museums established within the last two decades. In commemorative art, concrete followed a redefinition of the visual formula of commemoration. Initially, it replaced premium materials in sculptural installations that had been previously associated with monumentality, such as granite and marble. At that time, application of concrete – plain construction material usually applied in technological processes - was criticised and considered to be desecration of the noble commemorative purpose. Among other designers, Wiktor Tołkin, the designer of the commemoration site implemented during the 1960s in the area of the former KL Stutthof, also had to face such criticism. Tołkin designed the main elements of the sculptural installations to be made of concrete (Benter 1977: 197). The implementation of the monumental concrete blocks was possible thanks to then innovative engineering techniques suggested by Janusz Dembek. Those techniques were later on applied once again during the construction of the monumental site at Majdanek (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010: 66).

Concrete has already become the standard material applied in modern monumental art. As artistic material, it meets the requirements pertaining to the representation of traumatic events, because […] *as its application during the war suggested, it could be barbaric – and this particular connotation became a value under the changing circumstances after 1945* (Forty 2009: 32). The post-camp museum architecture refers, first of all, to those features. Architectural decorative concrete comes as the basic façade material in the buildings constructed in Buchenwald (1997), Mauthausen (2003), Bergen-Belsen (2004) and Bełżec (2004).

5.4.5 A Museum as a Centre of Education and Documentation

The internal spatial layout of the discussed architectural facilities deserves some more attention. It is created on the basis of an assumption imposed to provide harmonisation with the intended exhibition scenography, its stages and parameters. The interior that allows a narrative exhibition to be developed is focused on a visit scenario that follows the particular rhythm, from the prologue to the epilogue. This concept assumes that visitors will sequentially learn about the history of the site and its architectural transformations, from the pre-war period to the present. However, the architecture of new buildings constructed at the sites of the former camps is not only a reflection of modern aesthetic trends pursuing some poetic narration. It is also supposed to meet the requirements of the growing social interest by offering functional and spatial programmes allowing for its flexible use. According to Tomasz Kranz (2002), constructed recently in the immediate vicinity of the areas of the former concentration camps, historical museums are multi-functional and multi-aspect institutions. Alexandra Klei (2011) formulates an additional thesis stating that the spatial arrangement of the former Nazi camps gradually changes from the commemorative function to the historical exhibition, where educational strategies focused on universal values can be considerably expanded.

The scope of activities undertaken at museums has been changing with the current demographic tendencies, media revolution and new trends in museology (Kranz 2011: 14). The improvement of factual knowledge, learning and coping with history become more and more important, considering the fact that the generation of eyewitnesses is gradually passing away.

Over the last seven decades, created in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps, museum exhibitions have undergone the process starting at the individualised presentation of the image of the past created in accordance with the state policy and ending with presentation of history studied and developed by interdisciplinary international research teams. International scientific cooperation makes the museums start to acquire a form of some *orderly display cases of memory* (Golka 2009: 103). Modern exhibitions are created on the basis of scenarios that are developed on a growing scope of data. The exhibition in Bełżec has been arranged in that particular way. It presents the history of the functioning of the Nazi extermination camp and the extermination policy once pursued in the General Governorate. The exhibition presents rare relics that have been found in the area of the former camp, documents, photographs and audio-visual materials offered by private persons and external institutions (Banach 2014: 305).

The impossibility of comprehending the atrocities committed by the Nazi system drives further scientific research. The policy of shaping the historical knowledge about the former Nazi concentration camps based on scientific studies has resulted in a trend of organising documentation centers (in German: *Dokumentzentrum*) at the museum buildings. The spatial layout plans developed for new

facilities constructed next to the post-camp areas provide space for activities related to scientific research work. Documentation centers have become the workplaces for scientific teams who update the knowledge about the history of the camps in all the stages of their operation time. The museum architecture also represents an aspect related to the focus on the improvement of the knowledge about the camp and the analysis of all the aspects related to its operation. For instance, the only window set in the façade of the multi-functional building constructed next to area of the former KL Mittelbau-Dora provides an insight view into the library collection in the museum archives. Such a solution reinforces the image of the museum as an institution operating on the basis of the latest historical research.,

In order to define a formula for the participation of the next generation in the consumption of the past, Silke Arnold-de Simine (2013) provides a concept of secondary witnessing. The memory acquired from historical studies and carriers of collective memory is processed. Along with the development of historical knowledge, the social need of learning about a broader context of the genocidal operation of the concentration camp system under the administration of the Third Reich regime grows stronger. The unavoidable passing away of the eyewitnesses of that time means that the significance of the real historical places as the depositories of the memory about victims of Nazism becomes even stronger (Kranz 2011: 14). There have been centres organised at numerous commemorative sites to create a space for a dialogue between people of various cultural and religious background. Properly arranged, the space commemorating the acts of genocide performs an important educational role (Tanaś 2006, Kranz 2009). The modern approach toward the popularisation of the history of the concentration camps has resulted in the growing significance of the former concentration camps acting as education centers. Apart from the museum function, there are also activities focused on providing historical education and warning against the terror system that once underlay the Nazi regime, so that it should never happen again. Didactic activities allow visitors to understand the consequences of ideologies promoting xenophobia and racism. Established in the vicinity of the extermination sites, such centers facilitate organisation of international meetings for educators, pupils, students, scientific seminars and exhibitions. In 1986, next to the area of the former KL Auschwitz I-Stammlager, the International Youth Meeting Centre was opened in Oświęcim. Soon, other meeting centres operating on the similar principles were established in the vicinity of other historical areas of the former concentration camps, among others – in Sachsenhausen. Some of these centres have been arranged in the buildings of the former SS garrison administration that have been adapted for the purposes of activities undertaken by the centres. In Buchenwald and Ravensbrück, some organisations associated with Die Internationale Jugendbegegnungsstätte (JBS) (the International Youth Meeting Centre) have based their headquarters in the original buildings of the former barracks. After the reconstruction, the centre offers accommodation, seminar and cinema rooms, workshop rooms equipped with multimedia and catering facilities.

The need to carry out educational and popularising activities, involving interdisciplinary meetings, is also included in the functional and spatial arrangement of new museum buildings. Dedicated to this particular function, special rooms have been provided in new buildings in Hinzert, Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

5.4.6 Digital architecture

In the 21st century, digital technologies have largely contributed to the process of shaping museum exhibitions. In the areas of the former concentration camps, along with architectural solutions, they facilitate the understanding of the past. Due to various digital technologies, the scope of historical knowledge has become broader and more accessible. Through the information provided in applications for mobile phones or tablets, visitors may access augmented reality (AR) – a system that connects the real world with the data generated by computers. In that way, a visual collage is created to help modern viewers get closer to the atmosphere of the times when the Nazi concentration camps ran their genocidal operations. Digital devices allow visitors to experience the site with reflection and also to update their knowledge on an on-going basis. An example of such a solution is an exhibition with the use of QR (Quick Response) codes. When scanned by a mobile device, graphical signs put on various boards in the space of the former Nazi camp provide an access to an application that offers graphical data on the original architecture of the site. This technology also provides quick access to the digital archives with multi-media files containing, among others, accounts given by former prisoners and comments made by historians. Such access to the data has been implemented in the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Special applications dedicated to mobile devices allow visitors to analyse the subsequent architectural transformations that have taken place over the last decades. This type of media-assisted visiting has been already implemented at the KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme and at Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen. An artistic project referred to as the *Invisible Camp – an Audio Walk in Gusen* (in German: *Das unsichtbare Lager – Audioweg Gusen*) has been designed by Christoph Mayer. It allows visitors to explore the site with the

understanding of its historical context, including the area once covered with the infrastructure of the concentration camp in Gusen, which accommodates a housing estate today. As the artist points out, the audio walk he has designed is not a historical project. Its aim has been to create a collage of sounds and real views that affect memory. The artist invites participants to his project with a following words: *without any stations, marks or plans, equipped only with a digital device, you will be led through a housing estate to the historical, underground plane factory. You will hear the original recordings of personal memories shared by the camp survivors, witnesses of those times, who came from the local community and you will simultaneously see life of contemporary inhabitants of Gusen […]. You will hear what is not here any longer. You will see what is present. People talk about things that have been left unsaid* (http://audioweg.gusen.org/).

Modern civilisational development allows visitors to virtually recreate the structure of the Nazi camps, including the places where there are not any architectural traces of their operation left. Due to technological solutions offered by virtual reality, applications developed by IT specialists to be installed on tablets allow visitors to access digital models that visualise the architecture of the former concentration camp. The maps offer a possibility to follow historical routes and to see 3D models of already non-existing architecture, by activating them on tablets at various topographic locations of the contemporary monumental site, allowing visitors to superimpose virtual perspectives on the objects that can be observed in real time. Expanding an open-air exhibition, technologies of this type have been developed, among others, in Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen.

Considering technological possibilities accessible at present, Katarzyna Radecka questions further creation of sculptural and architectural commemorative forms at the historical extermination sites, indicating their *impermanency, hermeticism, inadequacy, dominance and predilection to provoke acts of devastation and desecration* (2017: 28). She also believes that a picture of the recorded past reality observed from the distance and confronted with the present condition of the historical architecture is the only way to properly respect the victims. Such an approach postulates cutting the post-camp areas off from the public access.

Over the recent decades, museum exhibitions have experienced intense transformations, being adjusted to the requirements of the society living in the global environment. Rainer Schulze (2008: 14) points out the characteristics of modern museums and their struggle to adjust to the present times and viewers who live in the world dominated by media. There are some marketing research surveys carried out for museums to find out how to attract the highest number of visitors. Specialists on consumer research try to ensure that museum space – apart from its primary function – can provide as many additional offers as possible to meet visitors' highest expectations. *A debate on new musealisation of commemoration sites – hence, a reflection on the possibilities and limitations to the application of modern forms, techniques and means of a historical tale, is undoubtedly in its initial stage* […] (Kranz 2011: 22). The topic of the considerations refers not only to the formula that the architecture of museum exhibition should accept but also to the question whether it should exist in the real or virtual world.

5.5 A Monument

5.5.1 Artistic Visualisation of the Past

A lot of activities related to architectural transformations in the areas of the former concentration camps involved establishment of commemoration sites within their premises. The process of commemorating victims of the Nazi terror in the post-camp areas was commenced on the day of their liberation from the SS authority. Due to the survivors' determination, during the first months after the liberation of the camps, simple commemorative symbols were set to honour the deceased: crosses, plaques, stones and obelisks. Such activities came as a prelude to the years of considerations over the adequate functions for the hectares of the post-camp infrastructure, the remains of which were spread from the eastern borders of France to the Baltic regions. Associated in committees established in most European countries, former prisoners were the most active group in fighting for the proper and dignified commemoration of tragedies that had taken place at the KL units. They protested against activities that led to the obliteration of the original architecture of the extermination sites and also against the lack of clearly defined space dedicated to commemorative purposes.

Discussed in the previous chapters, the results of the analysis pertaining to the development of the monumental function implemented in the post-camp areas over the last seven decades allow the reader to realize the variety of monumental forms in terms of their artistic expression. They have been created as a compromise achieved among strong social pressure, influence of the current trends in the historical policy, cultural traditions and economic possibilities of the state within whose borders these areas have been situated.

Despite the difficult historical and spatial contexts, most monuments implemented in the post-camp areas represent the high artistic level that has been appreciated by art theoreticians. The variety of commemorative pieces of art results, among other factors, from the popularity of the notion of memory that has been growing

since the 1960s in art and humanities and its formal transformation. The definition of a boundary between history and social, collective and cultural types of memory was taking place along with the artistic search of a creative method of commemoration. Moreover, the commemoration of the concentration camp tragedy *in situ* was usually carried out in large-scale areas. This fact forced the integration of sculptural concepts with architectural and landscape designs.

Created in the space of a former concentration camp, a monument is not – contrary to appearances – a solution that does not raise any objections. Next to the questions pertaining to its visual formula, there are also doubts referring to its very existence at a particular place. *Each monument transforms its previously neutral environment into an element of its own context, despite the fact that the environment absorbs it, making the monument a part of a larger space* (Young 2004: 275). The artistic visualisation of the past strongly interacts with the historical environment by getting involved into a contextual dialogue and raising doubts referring to the legitimacy of its existence. There are opinions that monuments come as "the spatial pollution" of historical sites. In such a context, artistic interventions into the space of the former extermination sites, which were implemented during the 1960s at the former KL Stutthof, KL Majdanek and KL Gross-Rosen, come across as undesirable actions, because they have introduced another level of memory narration that is unnecessary at such significant places (Cywiński 2006: 19). In order to prevent such actions, a concept of an open-air museum that comes as a proof of crimes committed at the site has been developed (it has been discussed in the previous chapters).

In addition to the above-mentioned concepts, it is important to recall the fact that in the last century the very essence of a monument raised a lot of controversies. Doubts about the legitimacy of creating commemorative forms of art in the public space has been present in theoretical debates since the early period of Modernism. Incomprehensible in economic terms, a human need of spending funds on tombstones and monuments was discussed as early as in 1937 by Lewis Mumford in *The Death of the Monument*.

Still, as Kazimierz Ożóg, an art historian, observes: *seemingly the most unnecessary result of the human pride and extravagance, a monument serves highly important social functions* (2012: 191). The concepts supporting the existence of pieces of artistic creation that visualise the memory about history, indicate – first of all – the utilitarian function of monuments in the representation of an attitude expressed by the society toward the past. Monuments help the society visualise the attitude to historical ideas, events or outstanding individuals in the public space. They indicate the notions and values from the past that, having been recorded in the forms of artistic artefacts, are also recognised today. Monuments can symbolise affirmation of the national pride, articulation of the identity or manifestation of humbleness toward the experience from the inglorious periods in the history. Monuments represent official commemorative strategies (Saryusz-Wolska 2011: 141), they speak about the society to which they have been dedicated and characterise the intentions of their founders. They also come as *signum temporis*, representing the social, political, state and general human values of the epoch in which they have been created (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995: 12).

In the post-camp structure, a monument strongly resonates with its space and harmonises with the surviving architectural infrastructure. As a guidepost, it requires visitors to look at a particular direction, without specifying the ultimate objective. A monument invites visitors to activate their personal associations and emotions to know more about the past it indicates (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995; Ankersmit 2006).

5.5.2 Commemoration at the Sites of the Former Concentration Camps as the Primary Instrument of Historical Policy

Functioning between public art and historical policy, a historical formula of a monument reflects aesthetical, political and civilisational revolutions and their related conflicts and compromises (Young 1999). As any other pieces of culture, monuments transfer information gathered in collective memory. Therefore, they are referred to as collective memory carriers (Kula 2002) or collective memory infrastructure (Irwin-Zarecka 2007). They are artefacts that one generation passes onto another generation to present its own narration about the historical events or individuals. Hence, they come as efficient tools to the historical policy that are particularly often applied by totalitarian systems. Jay Winter (2007) observes that all the nationalist movements present their own versions of history and construct political myths to organise the stories about the past and to invigorate their impact in the present. The areas of the former Nazi camps and their tragic history form a space where the demonstration of political perspectives can be particularly strong. The activities undertaken in this field were characteristic to the first two decades after the war. Suitable in terms of their size to organise state ceremonies, the large-scale monumental sites were then efficient tools to draw local and international attention to the current doctrine followed by the state. This approach was generally observed in the GDR that constructed its state identity from scratch, based on communist ideas and in separation with the national socialism, the source of which was supposed to have been located in West Germany. Strongly tinted with the anti-fas-

cism propaganda discourse and in the spirit of the socialist ideology, the means of artistic expression were applied during the implementation of the remembrance sites in the areas of the former concentration camps in Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück. The commemoration sites arranged at those places incorporated large-scale squares, where state ceremonies and public gatherings could be easily organised. The form of spatial development became subordinated to the creation and representation of the historical policy.

5.5.3. A Traditional Formula of a Monument

The analysis of over seven decades of architectural transformations that have taken place in the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps indicates the variety of artistic means applied during the creation of commemorative pieces of art. Initially, a traditional formula of a monument referring to classical, primary architectural structures (obelisks, columns) and sculptures set on plinths, was the most common method to accentuate the sites of the particularly tragic history in the post-camp areas.

The tragic past was also frequently referred to in figurative sculptures depicting prisoners. They were the most acceptable means of expression in the society during the time when the war events had been still fresh memories. Although the figurative sculpture was especially predisposed to create a bond of empathy between the visitor and the monument (Young 2004: 283), not all of its forms were always accepted. An example of difficulties caused by the formulation of a monument in the post-camp area is the history of the implementation of the Monument to an Unknown Prisoner of a Concentration Camp. Designed by Fritz Koelle, a figurative sculpture was unveiled 15 years before the transformation of the former KL Dachau into a commemoration site and it came as one of the first attempts at honouring victims of concentration camps through a commemorative project implementation. The initial concept of the sculpture designed by the artist in 1946 (under the title of *Inferno*) depicted a prisoner carrying an emaciated naked body of another inmate in his arms. The design was criticised by the former prisoners and representatives of the American military authorities as too realistic in depicting the pain that had been still fresh in the survivors' memory (Marcuse 2010a: 72). Koelle developed another design of the monument. This time it depicted an emaciated figure of a prisoner dressed in an oversized coat, who looks ahead thoughtfully. This design was eventually implemented in 1950, next to the crematorium building. It comes as a rare example of presenting a lonely prisoner figure in monumental art. Other figurative sculptures implemented at the turn of the 1950s and the 1960s usually presented groups of figures. They were usually created as compositional elements of large-scale sites covering large parts of the post-camp areas. Such monuments ideologically combined monumentalism with figurative expressionism (Taborska 2011: 44). Conceptually, they referred to the representation of attitudes expressing solidarity and support that had been experienced by prisoners in the most difficult moments of the camp reality (the sculpture designed by Waldemar Grzimek set next to the ruins of the crematorium in Sachsenhausen, the first sculpture in Bełżec designed by Stanisław Strzyżyński). The possibilities of expression provided by the formula of figurative sculptures were also explored in the visualisation of the tragedy of women who had been sentenced to death with their children (the sculptures designed by Will Lammert and Fritz Cremer in Ravensbrück, the sculpture designed by Mieczysław Welter in Sobibór).

Monumental projects implemented at that time in the GDR were strongly affected by the pressure exerted by the USSR to disseminate the communist interpretation of history and to subordinate artistic activities to the guidelines of socialist realism. Hence, the sculptures started to appear in the post-camp areas to visualise the victory over the national socialism regime won through the major contribution of communist party members (the sculpture designed by Fritz Cremer in Buchenwald) or with direct assistance of the Red Army soldiers (the sculpture designed by René Graetz in Sachsenhausen).

5.5.4 Abstractionism - in the Search of New Forms of Representing History

Two decades after the end of the Second World War, figurativism in monumental art pertaining to the areas of the former concentration camps was replaced by projects closer to abstractionism. Described in the previous chapters, international competitions for monuments commemorating victims of the concentration camps, which were organised in London, Oświęcim and Buchenwald, considerably contributed to that fact, along with the disputes around them. Furthermore, detached from the literal representation of reality, abstract art was better equipped to perform the task, considering the impossibility of depicting events that - in terms of their nature and scale - had gone far beyond any other human experience. While analysing the representation of the Holocaust history in art of the 20th century, Mark Godfrey (2007) notices the initial advantage of the abstract representation of this subject and the subsequent abandonment of abstractiveness in favour of the search of the proper visualisation that could facilitate universal perception. Abstract in their style, sculptural installations became frequent elements accentuating monumental compositions in the post-camp areas. They

were set in, among other locations, in Natzweiler (1960, designed by Bertrand Monnet and Lucien Fenaux), Płaszów (1964, designed by Witold Cęckiewicz), the extermination camp in Treblinka (1964, designed by Franciszek Duszeńko), Neuengamme (1965, designed by Françoise Salmon), Sztutowo (1968, designed by Wiktor Tołkin), Dachau (1968, designed by Nandor Glid), Lublin (1969, designed by Wiktor Tołkin) and in Hinzert (1986, designed by Lucien Wercollier).

5.5.5 Expressive Reminiscences of the Witnesses of the Camp Tragedy

Typical of abstract art, the lack of literalness made it possible to present the unpresentable history of the Holocaust. Referring to the subject by the composition of lines, forms and shapes, it allowed eyewitnesses to present their painful memories. Some monuments were implemented in the post-camp areas according to the concepts suggested by the artists who themselves had been prisoners of the Nazi concentration camps. The autobiographical themes strongly underlay the character of their art pieces, as in the case with Wiktor Tołkin. With fresh memories of his own personal war experience of imprisonment in Pawiak in Warszawa and in the KL Auschwitz, the artist started working on the concept for the spatial development of the former KL Stutthof and KL Lublin. Hence, in Tołkin's visualisation of the history of the extermination sites, the strong emphasis is put on the personification of camp victims and the tribute paid to their ashes. In the concepts developed for both monumental sites, the surfaces of the large-scale monuments are covered with dramatic bas-reliefs. From the expressive texture, the outlines of human bodies emerge – tibias, ribs, scaffoldings of bones. The artist's personal engagement is also proved by the fragments of Franciszek Fenikowski's poem that Tołkin incorporated amid the traumatic bas-reliefs set on the monuments in Sztutowo and Majdanek: *Let our voice sound from generation to generation:/For remembrance, not vengeance our shadows make plea/May our fate warn you – not a legend be/ Should people fall silent, the stones themselves will scream*.[1]

Powerful, expressive means of artistic creation proving the artist's strong personal engagement can be also traced in sculptural accentuation at the monumental site in Treblinka. Shortly after his joining the Home Army, Franciszek Duszeńko at the age of 17 was caught by the Germans and deported to the KL Sachsenhausen and then transferred to the KL Gross-Rosen. He created one of the most poignant narration of the history of the Holocaust, in cooperation with Adam Haupt. The reminiscences of his painful memories are portrayed in the sculptural details set on the top of the central monument. In the particular sections, a menorah is placed to symbolise the Jewish nation, next to a tangle of human corpses. *It seemed to me that the reliefs should be sculptured in a way that could show that the shape forming the subject – the image of deformed human corpses, their density - should be of the same substance of injured, torn granite, like a block of a core, like tombstones covering graves* (in: Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995: 250) – this is how the artist later described his inspirations.

5.5.6 A Memorial Park

The space with the highest concentration of sculptural installations is the memorial park located next to the walls of the former KL Mauthausen. A number of monuments have been erected there to commemorate various national groups represented by the camp prisoners. They represent not only the attitudes of their founders, who come from various countries, toward the past, but they also present diversified ways of artistic expression that have evolved over the seven post-war decades.

A park established in the vicinity of the monumental site at the former KL Sachsenhausen comes as a derivative of the solution discussed above. Since 2003, numerous individual acts of commemoration have been erected in a pine forest, next to the entrance to the premises of the former prison block. They have been founded by various associations, former prisoners' families and governments of different countries.

5.5.7 Redefinition of Monumental Art

Despite ample possibilities of artistic expression, sculpture is not the only method of metaphorical narration in the post-camp areas. In the second half of the 20th century, the artistic circles were dominated by the atmosphere that contributed to the gradual formal redefinition of monumental art (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010). Transformation of a monument, as a physical carrier of collective memory, took a multi-directional path: starting from heroic, realistic, symbolic icons that honoured national ideas and triumphs and ending with anti-heroic, often ironic artistic installations that represented national ambivalence and uncertainty typical of late post-modernism (Young 1999). Previously focused on soldiers' heroic sacrifice, the traditional language of the post-war mourning was not suitable for civilians who had suffered during the hecatomb of the Second World War, going through the Nazi programme of the Holocaust, concentration camps, bombing raids on the European cit-

1 Translation based on the motto to a book by Helena Kubicka, ***Zagłada KL Auschwitz Polaków Wysiedlonych z Zamojszczyzny w Latach 1942-1943,*** **Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau 2004 (*The Extermination at KL Auschwitz of Poles Evicted from the Zamość Region in the years 1942-1943*)**

ies and nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Müller 2002).

However, before reaching its turning point in the second half of the 20th century, monumental art had already undergone some gradual changes at the beginning of that century. As Jay Winter (2007) observes, the characteristics of the First World War created a number of categories that formed a framework for some terminologies currently applied to describe traumatic memories about victims of war conflicts (among others, the Second World War, the Vietnam War). Before the First World War, monuments used to glorify victorious battles first of all. Casualties among soldiers and civilians were considered as necessary costs incurred during the war operations. […] *traditional aims of war monuments included valorisation of suffering in such a way that it should be justified or even to become historical redemption* (Ziębińska-Witek 2006: 368). The Great War, as it is still referred to in this way in numerous western countries, shook the foundations of Europe that had been already building the civilisation based on modern trends. Suffered on the war fronts, the loss counted in millions resulted in mass mourning. War cemeteries started to appear on the battlefields to represent the sites of mourning (Winter 2014), which became pilgrimage destinations for millions of people, who were searching for their loved ones' final resting places. Mourning the dead was no longer a ritual carried out only inside the family circles. It reached beyond, including neighbourhoods and community circles. In numerous villages and towns in France, England and Germany, monuments were erected with the lists of the names of the fallen soldiers who came from those regions (Ibid.).

After the end of the Second World War, a monument underwent even more radical transformation in terms of ideology and practice. Functioning throughout the ages, the need to present historic events worth remembering and individuals worth distinguishing in the public space, was then completed with the need to show the worse side of humanity to the society. Next to the main purpose of a monument, namely: commemoration, a formula of warning and educating was developed.

Due to their tragic history, the Nazi concentration camps became the space that referred to such purposes in a universal way. The new function of a monument was extended onto the multi-hectare post-camp areas. The approach toward the large-scale scope required monumental art to include not only sculpture but also other artistic fields, focused on the spatial development of a physically defined space. Hence, several art fields became integrated in monumental art, namely: architecture and art of landscape architecture were applied to support sculpture in the creation of space dedicated to commemoration.

In places dedicated to commemoration, various monumental sites started to appear – spatial compositions that presented different artistic strategies for creating a poignant scenery that was intended to replace the original camp architecture or to reinforce its impact.

The architectural syntax started to play a more and more important role in the process of designing the commemoration space. Since the 1960 […] *commemoration sites have become the large-scale structures organised in terms of their architecture* (Olkiewicz 1967). The role of architecture in the commemoration space increased, which was also partly due to the blurred boundaries of the traditional taxonomy of visual arts. Gabriela Świstek (2013) refers to the contemporary translocation and integration in the field of architecture and other fields of fine art. They go far beyond the materialisation of ideas in the space.

Monumental sites create micro-worlds, the origin of which has been focused on the narration about the past. In the case of the former KL units, it has never been the whole area where the camps used to function – only their key zones. The commemoration space usually includes places that were directly related to the tragedy of prisoners in the past, such as mass graves, execution places, crematoria, prison blocks and some functional buildings, namely: the entrance gates, detention facilities, camp baths and camp kitchens. In the large-scale site, the composition of the architectural and sculptural elements renders the historical camp topography. It can be observed in Treblinka, where the empty space symbolically renders the infrastructure of the genocide. The post-war lack of physical proofs of the functioning of the extermination camp at that place made the task of providing the adequate projection of the past even more difficult. Honouring the victims, a monument itself could be insufficient to make visitors realise the shockingly industrialised character of the extermination system developed by the Nazi regime. Hence, the artists decided to metaphorically recreate the functioning system through the marking of its key elements: the railway tracks with the ramp, the way to the crematorium and the mass graves. The commemoration site has been designed so that the particular points along the commemoration path should evoke new emotions. Visitors to the commemoration site simultaneously become its "recipients" and "participants".

5.5.8 The Large-scale Format and Symbolic Re-creation of Crime Topography

The large-scale character of monumental sites means that the typical components of their spatial composition also include elements that are characteristic of urban structures (Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010: 115–116), such as boundaries and edges, roads and passageways, nodes, accentuation, highlight points, scenic spots and routes. The extended analysis also covers the following questions: the identification of spatial

development elements, such as the circulation system, buildings, greenery, small-scale architecture and the definition of relations between the site and its (landscape and cultural) context (Długozima 2015: 146).

The historical boundaries of all the areas where the particular concentration camps used to function are rarely accentuated in the monumental sites, due to the fragmentary character of the space undergoing the process of commemoration. The most distinguished zones are the areas where prisoner barracks used to stand. Barbed wire entanglement and watchtowers are presented fragmentarily (the former KL Sachsenhausen) or to an extent close to the original elements (the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau). The attitude toward those parts of the camp infrastructure has changed over the decades. Initially, fences were demolished for utilitarian reasons – usually to facilitate the adaptation of the areas to their new functions or to eliminate traumatic associations. Demolished during the early post-war years, barbed wire fences are reconstructed today (the former KL Gross-Rosen and the KL Vught). Similarly, after the liberation of the camps, numerous watchtowers were often dismantled and given away as recycled constructional material. In Flossenbürg, one of the stone watchtowers was demolished by the former prisoners to obtain material for the construction of a chapel next to a necropolis established there after the liberation. In the recent decade, the activities undertaken in the field of reconstructing the original camp architecture have resulted in the reconstruction of watchtowers during the process of restoring the historical functional layout of the camps (the former KL Gross-Rosen), or in the symbolic marking of their historical location (the former KL Neuengamme and the KL Bergen-Belsen).

At some commemoration sites, the former camp boundaries have been symbolically marked to allow visitors to realise the size of the former the KL unit area. During the 1960s in Treblinka, the probable historical boundaries of the extermination camp were marked with 2m high stone boulders. Three decades later, in Neuengamme, the line of the camp boundaries was symbolically marked with steel posts.

One of the most significant elements at the monumental sites arranged in the post-camp areas are their entrance gates. The entrance gate is a symbolic sign of the passage from the zone of everyday life to the zone of the sacrum. The role of the entrance zones at the contemporary monumental sites is usually performed by the original or reconstructed architectural objects, as in the former KL Auschwitz I, the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, the KL Dachau, the KL Gross-Rosen, the KL Buchenwald, the KL Mauthausen, the KL Sachsenhausen, the KL Stutthof and the KL Natzweiler-Struthof. Today, the historical gates leading to the prisoner blocks, especially those with the *Arbeit macht frei* inscription, have become the emblem of the Nazi terror. They are often referred to in numerous museum exhibitions, pieces of art and pop-culture artefacts.

In the places where the historical infrastructure was largely damaged or totally destroyed, the entrance zones are marked with sculptural installations. They usually take the form of simple concrete blocks (the former extermination camps in Treblinka, Bełżec, the KL Bergen-Belsen, the KL Flossenbürg and the KL Mittelbau-Dora). One exception is the monumental sculptural installation that forms a metaphorical gate to the area of the former KL Lublin. While working on its design, the author, Wiktor Tołkin referred to a parable based on a fragment of the *Divine Comedy* by Dante, describing the gate of hell: *those who pass through it, lose all the hope* (the author's description, in: Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010: 69).

The location of the entrance gate that leads into the space of a monumental site does not always correspond directly to the historical topography and location of the original main entrance to the camp premises. There are places where the original entrance zones have not been clearly accentuated at the commemoration sites (Płaszów, Hinzert, Chełmno-on-the Ner).

At the monumental sites, the gates start the spatio-temporal process of commemoration, in which the key role is performed by the road theme. The road theme allows the authors of the conceptual design to lead a walking route through the area of a former camp, which acquires the characteristics of a pilgrimage through its historical connotations. Generally, in the composition of the main route, the former entrance zone is assumed to be its starting point. The route continues along the historical main camp road or the railway tracks, leading through the barrack quarters or the ruins indicating the original camp layout. The final part of the route usually leads to the places related to the final destination of the major groups of camp prisoners: mass graves, ruins of the crematoria or gas chambers, where the central commemoration site is most often located. This sequence resembles the past procedures followed by prisoners at the concentration camps: registration, imprisonment in the barracks and death.

On the basis of the above-mentioned concept, a route for visitors has been arranged around the area of the former KL Lublin. The main compositional axis of the commemoration site at Majdanek combines two monumental shapes: a metaphorical gate and an urn hidden under a dome that refers to the Pantheon in terms of its architecture. Between those two elements, a panorama of the relics of the camp architecture is broadly spread. An analogical composition can be observed in Dachau, where the symbolic route assumes the formula of a passage that leads through the post-camp area – from the reconstructed part to the artistic visualisation of the trauma (Hoffmann, 1998: 83). Here, the main route leads along the former camp road to the former roll call square framed with the reconstructed buildings

and three temples. Then the route leads to the former crematorium.

A strongly accentuated route around the commemoration site has been also applied in the projects designed by the artists associated with the Brigade Makarenko group. In Sachsenhausen, the compositional axis leads from the gate (i.e.: Turm A) to a vertical dominant element, namely: to the large-scale monument depicting two prisoners protected by a Soviet soldier. It emphasizes the urban layout of the former camp, closed in the form of an isosceles triangle. The commemoration site arranged on the slopes of Ettersberg Hill, next to the former KL Buchenwald is characterised by a similar large scale. The composition is based on the idea of the passage through the artistically transformed landscape. The route leads from the classicistic gate, down the stairs decorated with the pylons covered with bas-reliefs depicting the scenes from the camp reality, to the mass graves. From the arena connecting the monumental urns, another flight of stairs leads up to a large square, where a sculpture depicting a group of prisoners in a liberation pose has been set. The culminating point of the composition is the Tower of Freedom. Heavily saturated with meaning, the monumental route functions in the spatial separation from the historical buildings located one kilometre away, where the commemorated tragedy actually occurred. Visible from Weimar nearby, it plays the role of a metaphorical guidepost showing the direction to the historical areas of the former concentration camp hidden in the forest.

At present, historical research studies supported with the methods of non-invasive archaeology provide detailed knowledge about the spatial layouts of the camps, the design of the crime architecture and the location of the mass graves in the areas of the former concentration camps. In such a spatial context, the routes followed by visitors are incorporated into the scenery that draws visitors' imagination toward the tragic past through architectural and sculptural means. In Treblinka, starting from the entrance gate to the commemoration site, a route for visitors has been arranged in parallel to a line of concrete blocks set in the rhythm that refers to the sleepers of a former railway track. Having reached the symbolic ramp, visitors can see a view to a monumental sculptural form that dominates over a clearing full of crushed rocks that cover the mass graves of the Holocaust victims.

Today, the idea that visitors should metaphorically follow the last route of prisoners, who had been sent to gas chambers, raises some moral doubts. In monumental sites developed in the 21st century, the last routes of victims have been marked in the spatial compositions, however, they do not form the main axes of visiting tours. Such an approach has been assumed in the commemoration site that is being implemented in the area of the former Nazi extermination camp in Sobibór. The project has been designed by Marcin Urbanek, Piotr Michalewicz and Łukasz Mieszkowski. The route for visitors to the commemoration site has been arranged along the historical road, however within a distance that ensures eye-contact but does not provide any access to the road actually used by the Nazis to send the victims of their ideology to the gas chambers to find painful death there.

It is worth recalling that the idea of recreating the last marches of camp victims was objected already during the 1950s by the team of designers led by Oskar Hansen, in the concept developed for the Monument to the Victims of Fascism, sent to the international architectural competition announced for the implementation of the commemoration site in the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. The idea for the development of the commemoration site was based on spatial accentuation in the form of a road leading through the post-camp area. Mentioned in the title of the project, the *Road* was not started at the historical Gate of Death and its course did not refer to the historical urban layout of the camp. On the contrary, the road was led in a symbolic opposition to it. Neither its beginning nor its end were designed at the locations that had been particularly significant to the tragic history of the extermination place. Leading across the post-camp area, the road was supposed to cover the fragments of the barrack ruins and other historical traces with a layer of asphalt. Also, it was not supposed to connect any spatial dominant elements there – the most important element was visitors' participation in the commemoration process and freedom in the interpretation of the surrounding landscape. Despite the fact that the project was never implemented, it significantly contributed to the transformation that later on observed in monumental art (Grzesiuk-Olszewska 1995; Murawska-Muthesius 2002; Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010; Posłuszny 2014; Rytel 2015). Oskar Hansen's idea to question the characteristic brutalism of the perpendicular urban layout of the former KL unit with the spatial composition of the commemoration site was implemented at very few remembrance sites that were later on arranged in the areas of the former concentration camps. Usually, artistic means are applied to accentuate the historical urban layout. An interesting project that combines both ideological attitudes has been implemented during the reorganisation of the commemoration site in the area of the former KL Bergen-Belsen. The main axis of the former camp has been exposed due to the arrangement of the landscape architecture, where the locations of the key historical facilities have been marked. Thus, the spatial layout of the camp has become more readable. At the same time, a symbolic negation of the structure of the crime scene was introduced by the location of the exhibition building. The new museum building, which is also an entrance gate to the post-camp area, has not been situated in the original location of the historical entrance gate to the KL

Bergen-Belsen. The axis along which its longitudinal body has been located also does not refer to the original urban structure. It does, however, indicate the geographical centre of the former camp that is located in its main road. The axis has been led along the pre-war path that had already been there before the Nazi KL unit was formed.

Today, the theme of activating the commemoration process through the arrangement of a route for visitors has become a permanent element in the composition of the commemoration sites. The contemporary commemorative routes expand their geographical scopes. They go beyond the historical fields directly related to the location of the main camps and start connecting locations that refer to the functioning of concentration camps situated outside their areas. In order to provide a wider context of the camp operation, some dedicated didactic routes have been developed to lead visitors through such places as railway stations where mass transports with prisoners used to arrive, industrial plants that used to operate next to the KL units and cemeteries where victims of the camp terror had been buried.

The prominent places at the commemoration sites, where the symbolic commemorative routes usually lead to, are architectural facilities related to the most dramatic stages of the operation of the concentration camps: gas chambers, crematoria and execution places. Frequently, they were the starting points in the development of some commemoration sites, as it occurred in Dachau (the crematorium building), Flossenbürg and in the former KL Mittelbau-Dora. In those concentration camps, where such facilities had been destroyed by the garrison members during the camp liquidation, their locations were at first symbolically marked and dedicated to commemorative purposes. Later on, the ruins of those buildings were covered by various forms of architectural shells. In the 1960s in Sachsenhausen, the ruins of the crematorium and the gas chambers were covered with a structure made of reinforced concrete. Its task was to protect the relics against the detrimental influence of the weather, however, the low technical quality of the structure resulted in the destruction of the concrete shell over the so-called Stazion Z. The elements made of reinforced concrete were dismantled and replaced by a light steel construction covered by fibreglass membrane that was protected by a layer of Teflon. Today, the simple, white shape of the pavilion is significantly distinguished against the background of the entire monumental site in Sachsenhausen that has acquired the character of an apocalyptic landscape.

A structure made of reinforced concrete protects the integrity of what has been left of the crematorium in Gusen - the only commemoration site so far referring *in situ* to the history of the concentration camp which used to function there during the war. In 1965, thanks to the funds collected by the associations of the former prisoners, a cubic monument was created in the form of an architectural shell protecting the crematorium furnaces. The architectural object, which now performs also the role of a memorial room, was designed as a simple concrete cube with a line of square windows in its lower part. In the project, the protection of the historical ruins was also intended to counteract the adaptation of that piece of land to the residential purposes, because after the war a nearby housing estate was actively expanding in the area of the former KL Gusen.

There is no structure provided to protect the gas chambers and the crematorium of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. The concept design assumed that the traces of the infrastructure intended for mass extermination should be exposed. In 1967, the ruins were incorporated into the commemoration site. Today, a terraced platform allows visitors to observe them from a broader perspective.

Prisoner barracks and their characteristic arrangement within the perpendicular spatial layout also play an important role at the commemoration sites. In fact, very few original architectural facilities of this type have been preserved. Most of the original wooden prisoner blocks have survived in the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. Spread on the multi-hectare space, the original rhythm of 20 barracks, which remain under constant conservational maintenance, and the remains of some other buildings, whose chimneys and foundation outlines distinguish them against the background of the site, allow visitors to realise the scale of the camp and its industrial aesthetics. Similarly to Sztutowo, Lublin and Mauthausen, in the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau the fragments of the prison blocks have been preserved to reinforce the character of the commemoration site with the testimony of its historical architecture. At places where prisoner barracks were demolished after the war, their former location was marked with the preserved historical foundations. The historical projections of the prisoner barracks were filled with rubble or post-copper slag to stand out from the rest of the surface of the commemoration site. At the commemoration sites in the areas of the former camps in Sachsenhausen, Dachau and Gross-Rosen that have been constantly modernised since the 1990s, the prisoner barracks have been reconstructed (with various degrees of respect paid to the conservation principles). Some of them have been returned to the post-camp areas from the places where they had been moved after the war (Buchenwald). Sometimes, the dismantled barracks have been replaced with sculptural installations. At present, at the commemoration site in Sztutowo, the empty fields of the New Camp and the Jewish Camp have been marked with symbolic white blocks covered with the numbers originating from the historical camp nomen-

clature. Such projects have been also implemented in Buchenwald, at the location of the former barracks, where Jewish and Roma prisoners were incarcerated. The accentuation of the key points in the historical space of the camp with the contemporary artistic forms has also taken place during the reconstruction of the barracks that were destroyed not very long ago, as it occurred in Sachsenhausen. At the beginning of the 1990s, two barracks housing the exhibition on the fate of Jewish prisoners were set on fire by some members of a neo-Nazi movement. They were reconstructed several years later, according to the concept developed by the Braun, Voigt & Partner studio. The designers combined the façades of the original architecture of the wooden barracks with the modern façade materials, such as glass and cast iron panels.

Another element of the urban layout of the former concentration camp distinguished in the composition of a commemoration site is the space of the former roll call square. It used to be the place related to the everyday terror of the camp life, with its characteristic ruthless organisation of order and the punishment system imposed by the SS garrison members. Hence, it is usually incorporated into the commemoration site with the respect to its original spatial parameters. In most cases, the roll call squares are covered with slag or crushed stones that form sterile large-scale squares allowing visitors to imagine the number of prisoners that had been forced by the SS garrison members to stand there during every day roll calls. The roll call squares have been arranged in that way, among other locations, in the KL Buchenwald, the KL Dachau, the KL Natzweiler, the KL Auschwitz I, the KL Mittelbau-Dora, the KL Ravensbrück and the KL Sachsenhausen. In the area of the former KL Flossenbürg, the roll call square was marked out in this way in 1997, when the post-camp area along with the buildings of the former laundry and camp kitchen facilities were passed from the private entity under the administration of the institution taking care of the commemoration site. Due to this fact and later work undertaken to revitalise the former landscape, the historical layout of the concentration camp eventually became readable. In 2016, after many years of filing petitions by various associations of the former prisoners, the Austrian Federal Monuments Office covered the historical area of the former roll call square at the KL Gusen with legal protection to provide a solution counteracting any further uncontrolled transformations there. Next to the preserved area with the crematorium furnace and the commemoration site created at this place, the roll call square is one of very few relics of the former camp that have avoided adaptation to the residential estate purposes.

The theme often referred to in commemorative installations is the role of the railway in mass extermination. The railway network allowed the German Nazi regime to transport victims from the western and southern ends of Europe to the extermination camps located in the east and carry out genocide on an unprecedented scale. The scope of the areas affected heavily by the Nazi persecutions is reflected in the names of villages and towns where the Holocaust victims used to live before their deportation to the camps. The inscriptions with the names of such places are carved on the stones in Treblinka and along the path that frames the mass graves in Bełżec.

The industrial character of mass transports is also accentuated by the marking of the former railway lines at the commemoration sites. They were used for facilitating the mass transports of prisoners to the Nazi camps. In the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, the main road to the monument located next to the ruins of the gas chambers and the crematoria leads from the historical entrance gate, along the preserved railway side-track. The railway tracks were closed with a block just in front of the central commemoration site platforms, next to the ruins of the gas chambers and the crematoria.

The elements frequently exhibited in the process of commemoration are also the units of the railway rolling stock. The original historical railway cattle wagons or their copies are exhibited at various museums (the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Skopje), at the commemoration sites related to the Holocaust (Fort Breendonk, the Radegast Railway Station in Łódź, Yad Vashem) and at the monumental sites developed in the post-camp areas (the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, the KL Stutthof, the KL Neuengamme). According to Piotr Cywiński (2016: 28), the Director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, a historical railway cattle wagon that has been exhibited on the ramp of the monumental site since 2009, is an element of the camp infrastructure that affects visitors' emotions in the strongest way.

The Holocaust mass transport is also referred to in numerous artistic installations that come as compositional elements of various monumental sites. In Treblinka, the railway tracks leading to the ramp, where prisoners were selected for extermination, were recreated by the designers as a line of stone blocks arranged rhythmically to reflect the usual arrangement of railway sleepers. In Bełżec, at the location of the former ramp, a sculpture made of railway tracks has been created. It is covered with gravel to symbolise the process of corpse burning – the bodies of the Holocaust victims used to be burnt on the railway track grates during the initial period of genocidal operations carried out at the camp. In this context, additional drama is provided by the shape of the museum building situated along the historical railway line. The rhythm of cuts in its facades refers to the mass transport trains arriving to the extermination camp. The dominating materials are reinforced concrete and cast iron and according

to the original concept, […] *the rhythm of the composition made of those materials may evoke associations with the railway cattle wagons standing still in concrete to reflect movement, action and existence that have been abruptly stopped* (Dunikowski et al. 2004: 42).

5.5.9 Scenography of Impressions

Apart from the activities undertaken to preserve the readability of the former topography of the concentration camps, an idea of creating monumental sites designed as special scenography has been developed to reinforce visitors' experience through the possibility of direct contact with the historical places. At present, monumental sites have been designed in such a way that all the key points along the commemorative routes can introduce new experience in the perception of the work of art. Visitors are no longer passive recipients of the staged tragedy but they participate in a tour around the space where several decades ago thousands of people were led to their death. Initially, visitors' active participation was limited to the role of metaphorical pilgrims. However, later on, more emphasis was put to their stronger activation. To stimulate more profound experience in visitors and to deeply affect their senses, solutions typical of sensual architecture were implemented.

At first, design decisions made during the spatial development plans for the monumental sites were mainly focused on ergonomic distortions. They came as a prelude to the subsequent experience related to the authenticity of the former camp space. The anxiety evoked by the space, where distorted ergonomic parameters were intentionally constructed, was supposed to introduce visitors to the commemoration process. The architecture was intended to oppress visitors and cause fear.

Such spatial solutions were implemented at the monumental site in the area of the former KL Lublin in 1969. In the foreground of the monumental sculptural installation, functioning there as a symbolic gate that leads visitors to the post-camp areas, Wiktor Tołkin designed several meters of a route located below the ground level. The edges of that canal are covered with stone boulders hanging over visitors' heads, evoking a strong sense of threat. The author of the monument recalls the time of the project implementation and the response of its first visitors: *I decided to hang the boulders over the route to symbolise danger. The fact that the construction team wanted to separate the area under the boulders with the safety lines may prove how strongly the installation can affect our imagination* (a description provided by the author in 2008, in: Gębczyńska-Janowicz 2010: 69). Instilled in visitors by the hanging boulders, the anxiety increases as they step out from the canal, walking up the steep, non-ergonomic stairs. After visitors pass the gate, a wide panoramic view opens to the remains of the camp architecture and to the mausoleum, where the camp prisoners' ashes have been put to their final rest.

Similar experience awaits visitors who enter the monumental site in Treblinka, where the commemorative route starts with an uncomfortable cobblestone trail. Each subsequent element of the symbolic journey into the past directs visitors to the culminating accent: a monumental sculpture that dominates over the fields of crushed rocks. The process of intensifying visitors' impressions has been also applied in Bełżec, where after passing over a rusty plate with a bas-relief depicting the Star of David, visitors are led into a crevice in the slope where the mass graves are located.

In the 21st century, next to the monumental sites, some architectural objects have appeared, representing functional hybrids built to combine the museum and memorial purposes. Some rooms in martyrdom museums perform neither display nor information purposes directly. They refer to traumatic images based on the accounts provided by eyewitnesses who were able to escape from the genocidal industry plants, such as, for example, the accounts provided by Rudolf Reder, who escaped from the extermination camp in Bełżec. He recalls: *the gas chamber building was low, long and wide, made of grey concrete, with a flat roof covered with tar paper. Above, there was one more roofing cover made of mesh filled with greenery […] some steps led to a dark corridor, half a meter wide but very long. It was completely empty – just four concrete walls. There were doors to the chambers on the left and right sides of that corridor. The doors were wooden, a meter wide and they slid by a pull of a wooden handle. The chambers were dark, without any windows and completely empty. In each chamber, there was a round opening of the size of a socket. The walls and the floor were made of concrete […]* (Reder 1946: 51 in: Kuwałek 2010: 50). Very likely, such accounts and many other memories have led the artists to the idea of creating sensual spaces: corridors of experience and other rooms oppressive to human senses. In the architecture of the Jewish Museum in Berlin, Daniel Libeskind refers to this type of scenography in the Holocaust Tower – a high, dark room isolated from external sounds, where the only visible element is a crevice at the top, through which the daylight enters the interior. Similar parameters have been applied in the Contemplation Room at the top of the exhibition building in Bełżec. The acoustic qualities of that empty, concrete room, with some faint artificial light coming in, turn each sigh into a deafening thud. The effect has been achieved through some technical acoustic interventions.

Undoubtedly, architecture has the power to affect visitors' senses. A building constructed to intentionally negate the foundations of the architectural syntax (the manifestation of which are, for example,

uncomfortable stairs, distorted floor levels, claustrophobic rooms) makes visitors feel threatened, hence, their physiological responses increase sensitivity to the commemoration process. The experiment involving creation of the space, where visitors to the monument become active participants of the commemoration process, leads to a dangerous phenomenon of inducing visitors to identify themselves with the victims and their fate. The imperative of commemorating takes up a very literal, behavioural formula. Visitors to the commemoration sites are asked to identify themselves with other people's pain, to accept their memories, to sympathise with them through their own suffering, to reconstruct and to process through the experience of the superficial trauma (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 1). It raises serious doubts about the justification of applying such mechanisms there. *Considering the role assigned to visitors, the narrations programmed in such a way are characterised by a balance between the executioner-victim relation and the witness' perspective; an attempt made at creating an aura of apparent empathy, because real empathy in this case is simply impossible* (Rytel 2015: 138–139).

5.5.10 A Concept of Restoring the Post-Camp Sites to the Natural Environment and an Idea of Creating an Apocalyptic Landscape

Passing the multi-hectare areas of the former concentration camps to commemoration purposes was also related to the question of the natural environment and its treatment in the future spatial development of those sites. Basically, there were two concepts developed and implemented at various stages of the architectural transformations of the post-camp areas. The first concept assumed transformation of those areas into memorial park sites, in accordance with the philosophy of the symbolic retroceding of the space desecrated by the human beings to nature. The other concept assumed that the scenery in the space desecrated with civilisational crimes should be maintained to evoke associations with the after-Holocaust landscape.

The most radical conceptual solutions related to the first idea were based on returning the post-camp areas to the natural environment and its impact. According to this idea, the original camp architecture should vanish as a result of the natural environment claiming the post-camp areas. Difficult to maintain in their original structure, the hectares of the post-camp space treated as an open-air exhibition were supposed to be grown with grass, bushes and trees.

During the first post-war years, the concept of forestation covering the post-camp area was implemented in the former KL Lublin (Majdanek). The process of planting trees was started in the spring 1948. With the support of the Directorate of the Forestry Office, which provided oak and birch saplings, almost 80 000 trees were planted in the area of the former prison fields, covering over 15 hectares (Olesiuk 2011: 240). They were supposed to form a remembrance park resembling one of the holy groves that – according to some Slavic beliefs – created a symbolic bond with the deceased ancestors. Over the next decade, the trees grew tall enough to cover the remaining buildings. Therefore, a decision was made to search for a new formula for spatial development that could allow the original topography to become exposed. Eventually, the trees and bushes were cleared (Olesiuk and Kokowicz 2009).

The suggestions of planting greenery in the post-camp areas were also put forward by some former prisoners. On the occasion of constructing a chapel in the area of the former KL Dachau, bishop Johannes Neuhäusler suggested that those areas should have been converted into a park (Marcuse 2005: 133). Eventually, some oak trees were planted around the chapel. Today, they stand out from the apocalyptic character of the ground surface that covers most of the remaining post-camp area.

The principle of returning the space desecrated by crime to the natural environment was also supported by the team led by Oskar Hansen in the Road-Monument, which has been already mentioned in the chapter. In the project, it was assumed that the post-camp area should have been left to the healing influence of time and nature. The only element maintained by people was supposed to be the road formed across the site, in the opposition to the perpendicular urban layout of the surviving infrastructure. The project assumed visitors' active participation in the commemoration process and freedom in the interpretation of the surrounding landscape. It popularised formal abandonment of the traditional convention of a monument set on a pedestal and encouraged a shift toward semantically multi-layered landscapes. The project also put in question the validity of the idea pertaining to the conservational protection of multi-hectare areas.

Biological reclamation of the post-camp areas has often resulted from negligence and decades of delay in making decisions on the ultimate formula for their development. The space that has been left to the influence of the natural environment is the area of the former KL Płaszów. Today, grown by wild greenery, the space is accentuated with an enormous shape of the monument and several smaller forms. The location of the former architecture of the Nazi camp has been lost and covered by grass, bushes and trees that have been growing there for decades. A similar situation can be observed in the area of the former KL Mittelbau-Dora, where the meadows have covered the former urban layout of the camp. Also, visitors cannot find any spatial information referring to the former architecture of the extermination site amid

the moors of Bergen-Belsen and greenery of Chełmno-on-the Ner.

Some project designs implemented at the extermination sites have been based on activities related to the planning of landscape parks that naturally alleviate the pain and tragedy implied by the post-camp remains. The assumptions based on such principles are mainly related to the necropolis function and they combine the landscape architecture with sculptural and architectural elements. The more participation of the natural environment in the role of reclamation was assumed in the concepts for the development of the former execution sites, the more unreadable the urban layouts of the former camps became and more original architecture and historical buildings disappeared. The physical elements of the camp operation were obliterated by growing greenery. Hence, the obliteration of traces related to the functioning of the camps and the minimisation of the possibilities to observe the scale of camp operation and their urban layouts *in situ* were the most frequent charges brought against several architectural transformations implemented on the basis of the park idea in the post-camp areas at the beginning of the 21st century. The most important argument was the reference to the fact that Himmler and his associates had developed some similar plans for the liquidated KL units. The Nazis intended to return the post-camp areas to the natural environment and leave them under its influence by creating parks or adapting them for agricultural purposes (Wiedemann 2008: 42).

Recently, the former landscape projects obliterating the historical urban layouts of the concentration camps have been undergoing the process of revitalisation. The characteristic elements of the historical structures have been marked with simple installations. The former foundations of the buildings and the main circulation routs have been recreated. For instance, such solutions have been applied by the Sinai studio in Bergen-Belsen and in Flossenbürg. The restoration of the historical topography is also planned for the post-camp areas of the former KL Płaszów.

The idea of a landscape park is opposed by a concept of the camp space development based on an apocalyptic scenery. To achieve the characteristics of a landscape after the fall of the civilisation, materials associated with destruction are applied: gravel, rubble, reinforcing bars, sand, etc. This type of narration can be observed in Treblinka, where crushed stones resembling destroyed Jewish tombstones have been placed on the large-scale concrete slabs. The landscape transformed into an apocalyptic scenery also appears in more recent narrations, for example in Bełżec, where the mass graves have been covered with slag and their boundaries have been marked with concrete frames, from which rusty reinforcing bars protrude into the air. In Sachsenhausen, the modernisation work has been undertaken to distinguish the outlines of the historical buildings in the post-camp area. The surface has been covered with gravel, slag and basalt slabs on which greenery can hardly grow. Some special conservational guidelines have been also developed for the area of the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau for similar purposes. They recommend counteracting the uncontrolled growth of greenery in the former camp premises.

Some particular influence on the camp commemoration sites has been exerted by land art – an artistic trend originating from the 1960s in the United States, in which the natural environment itself is considered as the basic material. A drastic contrast between natural land formations and brutal disruption of that order with a sculpture or a building started to appear in numerous project implementations of commemorative art as an element of anti-war qualities. For instance, Maya Ying Lin compares her conceptual design of a monument to American soldiers who died during the Vietnam War (implemented in 1982 in Washington) to a surgical incision in the earth (Campbell 2006: 137). A metaphorical wound also appears in Bełżec, taking the form of a crevice that leads the participants of the commemoration process to the hill that hides the mass graves of the extermination camp victims.

A direct visualisation of the notions such as the Holocaust, void or terror in the landscape has become very popular in commemorative project designs, because it physically emphasizes the metaphor of desecrating the space with the committed crime. However, this concept has also been criticised. Covering the area of the former camp with gravel is perceived as the symbol of cleaning and disinfection, whereas the sterile aesthetics of the architectural installations is conducive to some associations with so-called clean camp – a propaganda formula used by the Nazis to provide the public with an image presenting the concentration camps as a tidy, orderly places (Marcuse 2001: 2005).

5.6 A Tourist Product

5.6.1 A Site of A Former Concentration Camp as a Tourist Attraction

Architectural transformations in the post-camp areas in the 21st century have been taking place not only under the influence of transformations in the historical policy, but also as a result of some changes in the cultural context. Popularisation of historical events in media have contributed to intensified tourism to the commemoration sites created in the post-camp areas (Marcuse 2010b: 2002). As a sign of modern times, this phenomenon has become more and more common, being referred to by scientists as dark tourism. Defined by John J. Lennon and Malcolm Foley (2000), the notion approaches sites

commemorating tragic historical events as tourist attractions. Visitors wish to experience the reality of such events in detachment from the interpretation provided by media, to verify *in situ* the images of the past processed by the contemporary culture. The concentration camps and other places related to the Holocaust become destinations for a growing number of tourists. In the recent decade, genocide tourism has become more and more popular (Beech 2009). Hence, architectural transformations of the former Nazi concentration camps also refer to the adaptation of the infrastructure surrounding commemoration sites and museums to the requirements set by mass tourist visits.

The psychological and social profiles of visitors coming to places such as the former KL Auschwitz is highly differentiated. Sarah Hodgkinson (2013) distinguishes three characteristic groups of visitors to the sites of the former camps. Gradually getting smaller in its number, the first group consists of former prisoners, their descendants and relatives. It also includes people who are not directly related to victims through family bonds, but they feel related to them because of the same religion or nationality. In such cases, visiting the sites of mass extermination follows the formula of a pilgrimage.

The second group of visitors is formed by participants of school trips, study trips and scientific research visits. They usually intend to improve the knowledge they have acquired previously. The historical documentation gathered over the last decades and the scientific research studies related to it have been made accessible in the world's metropolises. The centres that have largely contributed to the popularisation of the concentration camp history are, among others: Yad Vashem in Jerusalem (1953), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (1993) and the Holocaust exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London (2000). One of the basic needs expressed by this group of visitors is verification of the knowledge they have acquired at historical museums or scientific publications *in situ*.

The third group is formed by occasional tourists who - being in the vicinity of a concentration camp - visit that place as a tourist attraction. Next to the Wieliczka Salt Mine and the Wawel Castle, a considerable number of visitors to Kraków have the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Oświęcim on their tourist attraction check lists. A similar situation can be observed in Munich – most tourist itineraries include both: the Neuschwanstein Castle and the former KL Dachau. The number of visitors to the former KL units of the Nazi terror has been systematically growing. In 2001, almost 500 000 people visited the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau and 15 years later the number of tourists who visited that place exceeded the level of 2 000 000 (data provided on: http://auschwitz.org/zwiedzanie/frekwencja/).

The increase in the number of tourists visiting the areas of the former concentration camps forces the reorganisation of the commemoration sites. Sławoj Tanaś, the author of the *tanathotourism* notion (2006), which is the Polish term for dark tourism, points out the dynamic development of tourist infrastructure in the vicinity of the former concentration camp in Oświęcim (2013: 136). Paid car parks, catering facilities, souvenir shops and posters advertising tours around the post-camp area reinforce the image of Auschwitz as a tourist product. These elements appear as a result of the growing demand in the tourism market.

This situation inspires a lot of reflection on the contemporary architectural organisation of the former camps of the Nazi terror. It also poses some questions about further methods of managing the commemoration sites and museums located there. Becoming another tourist attraction on a sightseeing route, the areas of the former concentration camps are dangerously losing features typical of a sacrum zone. Moreover, it is also possible to observe some visitors' inappropriate behaviour at those places (Hodgkinson 2013). As the Holocaust symbol, the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau has been separated from its historical character and has become a tourist attraction, a museum of macabre, a scenography of Hollywood movies and a space for disputes over the monopoly on the historical and religious truth (Zydorowicz 2011: 698)

5.6.2 A Visitor Centre

All the controversies have led to the construction of architectural facilities next to the commemoration sites to institutionally organise tourism there. Visitor centres (in German: *Besucherzentrum*) are usually located outside the post-camp areas and perform the role of the entrance zones, where visitors are prepared to participate in the commemoration process. The functional and spatial arrangement of visitor centres assumes tourists' growing interest. Hence, visitor centres are designed to provide rooms directly related to tourist services: tourist information desks, toilets, cloakrooms, luggage lockers, facilities for guides. The arrangement also addresses the need of preparing visitors for the atmosphere of commemoration. Therefore, visitor centres offer rooms where it is possible to organise meetings with the guides or lectures based on documentary movies. The spatial layout assumes the location of commercial services (bookstores) and catering services (cafes, restaurants). The circulation routes in the vicinity of the post-camp areas have been also reorganised. Specialist strategic programmes cover the development of the infrastructure next to the post-camp areas, based on the increased number of parking lots for passenger cars and coaches, with clearly accentuated entrance zones.

Based on the above-mentioned assumptions, a new visitor centre was opened next to the area of the former KL Mauthausen

in 2003. It was constructed below the walls of the main post-camp premises. The architectural concept was developed by Herwig Mayer, Karl Peyrer-Heimstätt and Christoph Schwarz and it assumed the minimalistic façade made of architectural decorative concrete to blend into the background of the original historical buildings. In 2009 in Dachau, an atrial building was constructed in accordance with the design developed by the Florian Nagler Architekten studio. The shape of the building refers to the exhibition pavilions. Another dynamic shape that would refer to the architecture of an exhibition pavilion was designed by h.t.architekci studio for the Visitor Centre at the former KL Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was opened in 2014.

In the 21st century, architectural intervention in the post-camp areas or in the space in their vicinity has been certainly intensified. The popularity of the commemoration sites created in the post-camp areas keeps growing with the level of modernisation implemented in the spatial narration about the past. Including the current architectural trends, the reorganisation results in the increasing popularity of commemorative sites and activation of their history in the social awareness. The implementation of various commemorative architecture projects increases public interest in historical events and sites where they took place. An increase in the number of visitors has been recorded at the sites where the commemoration scenarios have been created, matching modern architectural aesthetics. It particularly refers to the commemoration sites in Bełżec, Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen and the KZ-Gedenkstätte Flossenbürg. The new commemoration sites that integrate architecture with landscape designs have turned out to be interesting not only to artistic circles. This phenomenon can be compared to a social phenomenon that today is referred to as the Bilbao effect. It refers to the popularisation of a place through the investment into a spectacular architectural project implementation. Such a strategy was successfully applied in Bilbao, where a new museum of modern art designed by Frank Gehry resulted in the global interest in the small Spanish town that was going through an economic crisis at that time.

Mark Godfrey (2007) points out the spectacular nature typical of contemporary commemoration sites that brings cultural and memorial representation dangerously close to the Hollywood style. It can be observed in commemoration parks created in the 21st century on the basis of the principles characteristic to other types of theme parks. The innovative character and spectacular nature are used there for drawing the attention of contemporary visitors, whose senses have been dulled by everyday sensations.

6 Conclusions

Covering Europe with a dense network, the areas left after the concentration camp system organised by the Third Reich have been significantly affecting the contemporary collective memory for decades. Their dramatic history proves barbarity that might be hidden at the foundations of even the most civilised societies. As discussed in the first chapter of this monograph, the history of the KL system exerts the strong influence on the culture that has been shaped for over the last seven decades. It is proved by the implementation of numerous projects exploring the main theme based on the traumatic past of the concentration camps in various fields of art. The Nazi terror described in the reality of a concentration camp has become the leitmotif of numerous literary, film and visual arts. Difficult to present, the theme has also forced creators to look for new means of visualising the past in the public space. Some implemented projects have been inspired by architecture, which - as the art of spatial design - has turned out to be particularly suitable for leading the narration of this kind. Usually, the primary aim of architectural design is to provide safe environment for everyday human existence. This experience has been applied in commemorative projects to achieve quite an opposite effect to symbolise the war hecatomb – a physically determined space that inflicts anxiety and the sense of threat on visitors.

Spatial development design at the sites of mass genocide comes as a highly specific task. Apart from standard artistic skills and substantial engineering knowledge, designers also need orientation in the historical context, sensitivity to former prisoners and their families' feelings and knowledge about the culture of various communities (Wolschke-Bulmahn 2001: 274). A lot of controversies raised by various forms of architectural transformations that have taken place in the post-camp areas prove that it is extremely hard to reach a compromise that would satisfy various groups, who are committed either to develop or to hinder the commemoration process.

The second chapter of the monograph proves the well-known postulate stating that a monument is indeed an effective political instrument in the public space. Monuments do not replicate the history of concentration camps, but they present the current narrations about the past. Depending on the ideas represented by curators, who are responsible for the administration of the post-camp areas, the key objectives of the historical policy are implemented in the traumatic space. Over the last decades, the post-camp areas have been transformed in various, sometimes very specific ways. An inconsistent approach toward the issue who was the victim and who was the crime perpetrator, over-interpretation and understatements have turned the commemoration sites established in the post-camp areas into specific laboratories of collective memory. The analysis of architectural transformations that have been taking place in those areas allows the reader to realise various paths followed by the European countries in order to cope with the post-war trauma. Facing the pain experienced by thousands of people who were coming back from the concentration camps, reopening the wounds that have been lasting over the generations, obliterating the genocide committed by the USSR in the east and concealed by communists, the period of denazification shortened by the Allied in order to start the reconstruction of international economy and later global tensions of the Cold War directly affected the commemoration process – not only the way how the areas of the former concentration camps were commemorated but also the question whether they were to play an important role in the historical policies followed by the particular countries. The history of the post-war architecture created in the post-camp areas and the areas that were directly related to the operation of the former camps, has been woven to form a complicated structure, combining various historical plots and shaping a contemporary picture of Europe. Spatial transformations have not always led to the commemoration process – in many cases, the historical layouts of the concentration camps have been obliterated by their adaptation to the performance of new functions or by the impact of the natural environment.

Commemorating the areas of the former Nazi concentration camps resembles a nesting box system. The analysis of the history of the particular commemoration sites reveals their fate, political and cultural contexts in which they were established, operated and sometimes liquidated. The history of the commemoration process is rich in multi-layered plots. The overlapping structure of various commemoration

methods and a vast collection of artefacts related to collective memory are often compared to a *palimpsest* (Huyssen 2003; Sacha 2013). The multiple architectural contextual overlays have obliterated the historical significance of the post-camp areas. The years of accumulated issues related to the commemoration and sometimes intentional amnesia have irreversibly changed the original spatial layouts of the crime scenes. Today, although it comes as a proof of the past, the surviving architecture functions in the spatial structure that is entirely different from the brutal everyday reality of a concentration camp.

Architectural transformations of the concentration camp structure started on the day of liberating the camps from the authority of their SS garrisons. During the first post-war decades, those transformations generally involved tidying work, adaptation for the performance of new functions that resulted from the needs that appeared in the post-war chaos and the first attempts made at the establishment of some physical carriers of memory about victims of the camp terror. Early spatial design projects, which fundamentally transformed the urban layouts of the former camps and liquidated their architecture, involved activities leading to the establishment of necropolises. The need to secure mass graves hiding the remains of prisoners murdered in the camps contributed to various forms of spatial development of the post-camp areas, integrating different fields of art inspired by monumental and sepulchral art. Announced at the end of the 1950s, the international competitions for the design of commemorating victims of the Nazi terror contributed to the redefinition of the *monument* notion – in the areas of the selected former KL units, the large-scale monumental sites were established. In their narrative formula, their architectural setting motivated visitors to participate actively in the commemoration process. Regardless of the strong impact of the surviving camp infrastructure seen as a historical document, art also had the potential to transfer emotions evoked by the genocide committed there. Still, the artistic interference that was assumed to add to the emotional strength of the original post-camp architecture considerably contributed to its liquidation. Today, when more and more eyewitnesses of the tragedy pass away, the historical traces are being restored to the former topography of the crime scenes. Some functional buildings of the former concentration camps are being reconstructed, the former urban layouts are being uncovered from the greenery that has been overgrowing the large parts of the post-camp areas for years. The landscape revitalisation projects that have been implemented in the current century involve various spatial compositions of artistic installations and apply solutions typical of land art to form specific geoglyphs that restore the outlines of the historical architecture.

Sustained in Europe after a number of political and cultural transformations, the contemporary pluralistic discourse of memory triggered demand for public representation of much more specific aspects of the past related to the Nazi terror. The need to commemorate those fragments of the history of KL units, which have been functioning on the verge of collective memory for decades, has resulted in the establishment of various memorial parks, remembrance walls and lapidarium sets that visualise the mourning of the deceased prisoners' families. They also allow private institutions to pay tribute to their former members and various social associations, religious and national communities to demand the restoration of the memory about the fate of the forgotten victims. Today, large-scale monumental sites dedicated to the universal semantic narration are rarely established. The contemporary historical policy has been looking for some greater potential in the implementation of museum facilities, where historical data can be presented in a broader context. In the vicinity of the former concentration camps, new buildings have been constructed to accommodate space dedicated to museum exhibitions, scientific research centres, rooms for interdisciplinary meetings and visitor centres for tourists.

The monograph proves the thesis stating that despite their common history, the areas of the former concentration camps have been so far developed in their individual ways, without any application of the universal principles of use and comparable means of artistic expression that would be helpful in their perception as the equal parts of one genocidal system organised against the humanity. The examples of the monumental sites established in the areas of the former concentration camps indicate that there is not any consistent commemoration rule in terms of the subject, as well as in terms of monumental art solutions that have been applied. Regardless of the amount of work that has been performed over the last decades to modernise the architecture of the former concentration camps and to revise historical data presented at the museums, each former KL unit presents history in a very individual way. The question pertaining to the structure of the genocidal system based on the network of interdependent concentration camps designed by the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office is still rarely manifested. An individual approach to commemoration should facilitate activities aimed at presenting the contemporary generations with a clear picture of how the discussed system and the Nazi regime used to operate. Although each former concentration camp has its own history, origin, objectives stated by the SS administration and demographic structure of victims, all the camps used to function under one interdependent organisational system. The current commemoration process intended to achieve the discussed aims is mainly implemented outside the post-camp areas. At the turn of the 20th and the 21st centuries, museums dedicated to the history of

the Nazi terror were opened *en masse* all over the world. The data collected there presents history in a very broad thematic spectrum. A similar way of representing history is required at the commemoration sites established within the boundaries of the former concentration camps. This strategy might be supported by the extended thematic scope of museum exhibitions that visualise the interdependence of the particular units within the entire system administered by the SS Main Economic and Administrative Office and also by the formula of monument decentralisation – an artistic installation located in the same form at each former KL unit as common spatial accentuation.

The history of establishing monuments in the post-camp areas represents a difficult way followed by the post-war society and comes as a continuation of the traumatic fate imprinted in the post-camp space. The new era, in which monuments are created according to the myths and ideologies related to their founders, also transforms their interpretation – the subsequent generations endow them with new meanings and adjust the narration of the past to their own reality. While analysing the current history of commemoration (Table 1), it is possible to conclude that the commemoration sites will undergo further transformations. Every two decades or so, the society returns to the reflections on the commemoration forms, refreshing the perspective pertaining to the narration about the past, depending on the current generation's needs. Architecture will continue to contribute to the implementation of spatial development projects in the post-camp areas and in their surroundings – projects that will perform the functions of a necropolis, a proof, a museum, a monument, catering to the needs of the future generations, who will treat the former extermination sites as tourist destinations.

The further back in time the events of the Second World War pass, the more impressive its monuments become (Young 2004: 270). Monumental art in the areas of the former concentration camps often takes up some spectacular forms in terms of their size, materials and means of artistic expression that have been applied. Monumental sites that have been established there fill visitors with admiration for the effort made to implement the commemoration projects. Still, the particular estheticisation of evil at those places raises well-justified ethical doubts, because the visualisation of pain shared by millions of people should not cause any kind of pleasure in visitors (Chrudzimska-Uhera 2008: 120; Posłuszny 2014: 38). Considering such a context, it is possible to assume that the considerations about the commemoration formula for the sites that have become so significant to the human history will remain current for at least several decades to come.

The monograph does not come as a summary of the process involving architectural transformations that have taken place in the areas of the former concentration camps established by the Third Reich regime. Certainly, such transformations will be continued by future generations as a tribute paid to the victims of terror and as a warning against civilisational turmoil that may end with a similar hecatomb. The data and analysis presented in the monograph prove that the need to present the history of the concentration camps is still relevant and has not expired. It has been functioning in the field of myths and half-truth exploited for the current ideological requirements.

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