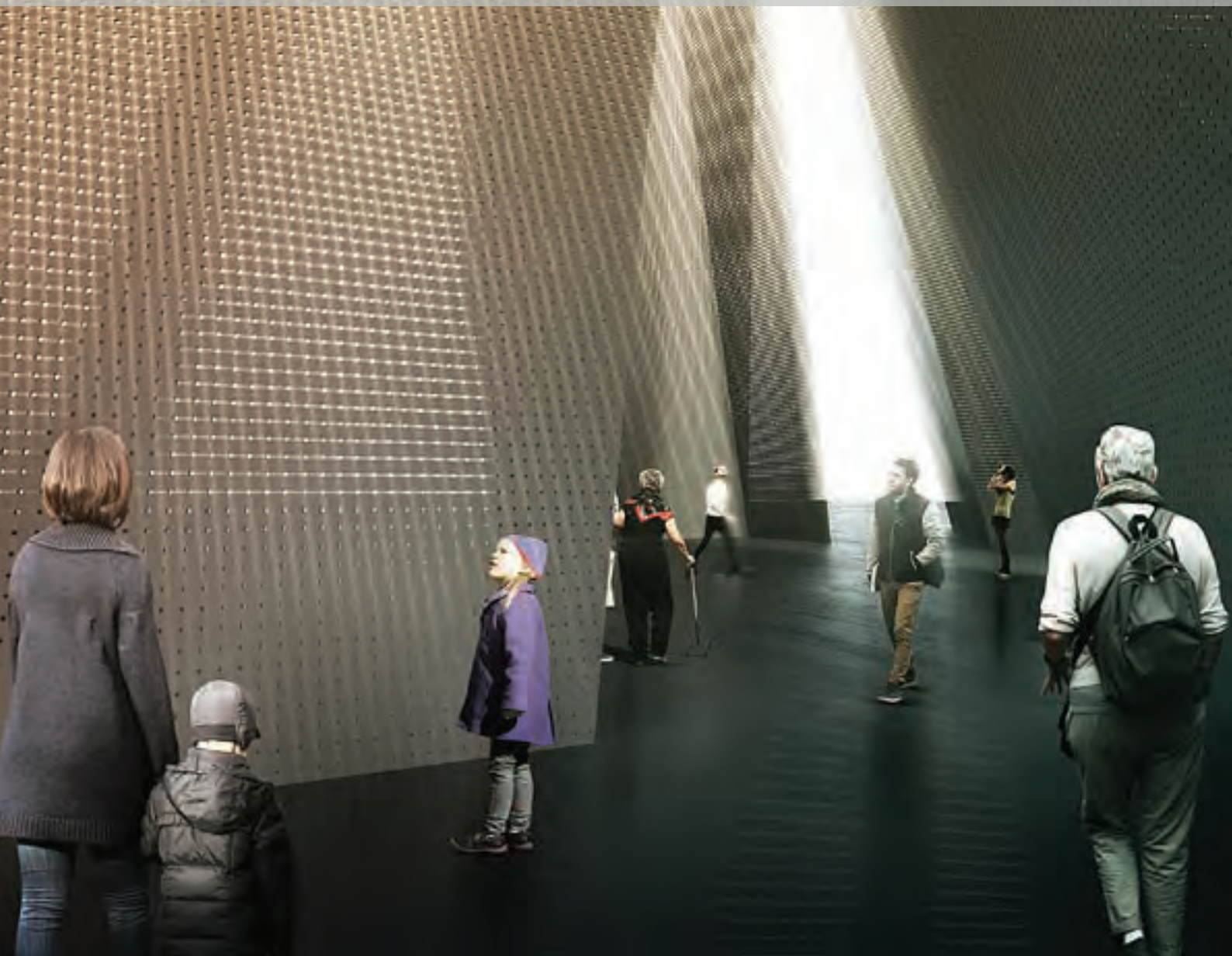




# Britain's Promise to Remember

The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report



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January 2015

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This publication is available from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London SW1A 2AS  
Tel: 020 7276 1234

If you require this publication in an alternative format, email [info@holocaust-commission.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@holocaust-commission.gsi.gov.uk) or call 020 7276 1234.

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## FOREWORD



At the first meeting of the Holocaust Commission exactly one year ago, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, set out the task for the Commission. In response, one of my fellow Commissioners, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, noted that the work of this Commission was a sacred duty to the memory of both victims and survivors of the Holocaust.

One year on, having concluded its work in presenting this report, I believe that the Commission has fulfilled that duty and has provided a set of recommendations which will give effect to an appropriate and compelling memorial to the victims of the Holocaust and to all of those who were persecuted by the Nazis. The recommendations also canvass a range of actions which will enhance this country's existing educational effort. We have no doubt that, in combination, our recommendations – if properly implemented – will meet the Prime Minister's charge to the Commission that in 50 years' time the memory and lessons of the Holocaust will be as strong and as vibrant as today.

My fellow Commissioners and I – together with those who made up our two Expert Groups – have been conscious throughout this past year of the enormous responsibility we have had to the memory of those who died under Nazi persecution and to those who survived during those years when humanity was tipped into the abyss of evil and depravity. We were equally conscious of our responsibility to this and future generations to ensure that the Holocaust does not move from living memory, with the depletion of the survivor generation, into a sterile history.

The Holocaust was the planned, systematic, industrialised murder of 6 million Jewish men, women and children during the Second World War. It was the first time in history that plans were put in place to annihilate every member of a particular race or people. The Nazis did not confine their murderous intent to the borders of Germany, but expanded it to every country they conquered. The Holocaust is unprecedented as the most extreme form of genocide ever planned, contemplated and executed in the history of mankind.

The Nazi machine successfully co-opted civic society into becoming agents for the Final Solution in every area they dominated. Essential to this strategy was the careful and systematic process of de-humanising Jewish people so that the agents of death and their collaborators found common and easier cause in the prosecution of the Final Solution, even when they knew the war was lost. Stripped of their possessions, their livelihoods, their citizenship, their dignity and their essential humanity, Jewish people were singled out for the sole purpose of expediting their murder.

The Holocaust is the product of an ideology. It was not a battle for land or power or even a grotesque response to perceived wrongdoing by Jewish people. It was rooted in an irrational hatred of Jews, for simply being born a Jew or of Jewish ancestry. Never before had a people been denied the right to life simply because of the crime of being born. It was, ultimately, a product of a thousand years of European antisemitism.

The Holocaust was also a catastrophe for human civilisation. The very scientific and industrial innovation which had propelled society forward was used on an extreme scale to take humanity into the deepest abyss of moral depravity.

Every generation has to confront the Holocaust: how did it happen, who made it happen, who allowed it to happen and who will make sure it does not happen again? Recent events in Paris and the tyranny and barbarity we continue to witness in Iraq and Syria are telling testimony of this need. It is vital that people from all walks of life learn about and understand the Holocaust, for the sake of the people who died and as a way of honouring those who survived, as well as to learn the contemporary lessons from this, the darkest hour of human history.

The Jews of Europe were of course not the only victims of the Nazi persecution. The Roma community, Jehovah's Witnesses, political dissidents, homosexuals and people with mental and physical disabilities all suffered greatly. The Commission concluded that it would be an injustice to the memory of those other victims not to reflect upon their tragic experiences too. Furthermore, without in anyway impinging on the centrality of the Holocaust in the Commission's recommendations, understanding of the Holocaust can be strengthened further by learning about the fate of other victims of Nazi persecution.

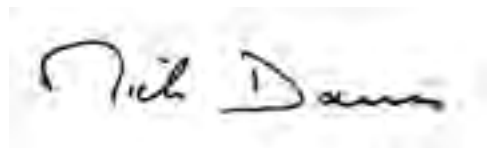
This report has deliberately been kept brief and accessible. It contains an executive summary of our key findings and consequent recommendations as well as a more detailed analysis. While all of the recommendations are important, it is the final recommendation which will ensure that this report will not gather dust on the shelves of an obscure Government building but rather will be acted upon with vigour and a sense of urgency. To take these recommendations forward the Commission proposes the immediate creation of a permanent independent body. This body will



implement the recommendations to commemorate the Holocaust and ensure a world-leading educational initiative. It will thereafter guide, sponsor and facilitate ongoing commemoration and educational initiatives to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust and its lessons remain vibrant and current for all future generations.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to Prime Minister David Cameron for setting up this Commission and affording myself and my colleagues the great honour of giving expression to this sacred duty. Indeed, I pay tribute to all three major political parties of this Parliament who have been unstinting in their support of the work of the Commission. I also would like to thank each and every one of my fellow Commissioners and members of the Education and Commemoration Expert Groups for their contributions and support. In particular I thank the Chairs of the Expert Groups, Dame Helen Hyde and Sir Peter Bazalgette, without whom I would have been bereft of the wise counsel which kept me focused on delivering a report which did justice to the cause, while at the same time making recommendations which were in the universe of the possible. In this regard the work of our small Secretariat deserves special mention. The team, led by Tim Kiddell, of Helen Cook, Alison Culshaw, Andrew Morris, Helen Myer and Sally Sealey was industrious and inspiring. It is their professionalism and commitment which has allowed us, the Commission, to report just one year after our inception on a complex brief and a vast topic.

Finally, it falls to me to commend this report to the Prime Minister. In so doing I dedicate it to each individual victim of the Holocaust: those who perished and those who survived. It is written and presented with the memory and humanity of the dead in mind and in recognition of the humanity and valour of those who survived.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mick Davis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mick Davis

27 January 2015





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. Introduction

Seventy years ago, the world recoiled in horror as Allied forces liberated Nazi concentration camps and exposed the true scale and industrial evil of the darkest hour of humanity. Families in Britain listened with revulsion to Richard Dimbleby's harrowing description of starving prisoners and 10,000 heaped corpses encountered by British troops as they liberated the camp at Bergen-Belsen. In total, six million Jews, including 1.5 million children, were brutally murdered in the Holocaust along with millions of other victims of Nazi persecution.

Ensuring that the memory and the lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten lies at the heart of Britain's values as a nation. In commemorating the Holocaust, Britain remembers the way it proudly stood up to Hitler and provided a home to tens of thousands of survivors and refugees, including almost 10,000 children who came on the Kindertransports. In debating the more challenging elements of Britain's history – such as the refusal to accept more refugees or the questions over whether more could have been done to disrupt the Final Solution – Britain reflects on its responsibilities in the world today. In educating young people about the Holocaust, Britain reaffirms its commitment to stand up against prejudice and hatred in all its forms. The prize is empathetic citizens with tolerance for the beliefs and cultures of others. But eternal vigilance is needed to instil this in every generation.

Seventy years on, there are people today who try to deny that this systematic attempt to destroy an entire people actually took place at all. There are some who try to make excuses for it, who try to diminish its gravity and horror or who try to draw offensive and inappropriate parallels with other political causes. Furthermore, this report presents worrying new evidence from the world's largest study of young people's knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, conducted by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. This found that the majority of young people do not know some of the most fundamental facts that explain why and how the Holocaust happened, even after studying it at school.

Alongside the ongoing challenge to preserve the memory of the Holocaust is a failure to learn the lessons it teaches us. While the Holocaust was unprecedented and should never be seen as equivalent to other genocides, we see many of the same steps from prejudice to persecution in other atrocities, like those in Rwanda and Bosnia or the crimes of ISIL today. The circumstances are always different, but that only makes the study of the Holocaust more important. It provides a lens, a window, a light that allows us to watch, measure, illuminate and understand the emerging signs of the acceptance of hatred and the stages of prejudice ultimately turning to violence. Indeed, the poisonous words and passive acceptance of discrimination which marked the beginning of the Holocaust can clearly be found in the ideology of extremism or in the hatred that underpins antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and homophobia today.

The failure to learn the lessons of the Holocaust is also apparent in the rising tide of antisemitism once again sweeping across Europe. Recent months have seen the murders at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, the killing of a Rabbi as he walked to synagogue in Antwerp, the deaths of four hostages in a kosher supermarket in Paris and the migration of Jewish communities in fear of growing discrimination. While the situation in the UK is better than in many other countries, there has been a worrying increase in antisemitic incidents here too – from high-profile gestures on the football pitch and attacks on Jewish charity shops to the recent criminal damage in Hackney. The Community Security Trust, an organisation that looks after the safety and security needs of the Jewish community, recorded more than 1,000 incidents last year, making 2014 the worst year on record.

Over the last year, the Commission has met with hundreds of Holocaust survivors from across Europe, Israel and America, including holding one of the largest ever gatherings of British Holocaust survivors at Wembley Stadium. Commissioners were awestruck by the courage and determination of these incredible people, many of whom dedicate their lives to sharing their testimony and reliving horrors that others would do almost anything to try and forget.

Holocaust survivors have seen it as their duty to recount the most harrowing moments in human history to teach us all the importance of fighting hatred and prejudice in all its forms. Many of them today live in fear that when they are gone the memory and lessons of what they endured will be gone too.

This cannot be allowed to happen. Just as Holocaust survivors have honoured their duty to us, so we must act now to honour our duty to them. We must ensure that the memory and the lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten and that the legacy of survivors lives on for generation after generation.

It was in making this promise that the Prime Minister set up this Commission with the full support and active membership of all three main political parties. This report sets out the steps that the Commission believes must now be taken to honour this promise. These steps will realise a bold vision that will enable Britain and the wider world to draw from this unparalleled horror and tragedy lessons that will resonate with people of all faiths, from all lands, for all times.

## 2. Holocaust Education and Commemoration Today

The Commission was clear at the outset that it should not make recommendations that would simply duplicate or undermine existing work across the UK. So, the Commission began by carrying out a detailed audit of what Britain is already doing, alongside a study of best practice in other countries. This was informed by a series of consultation events and meetings – including at the White House and the United Nations – and a Call for Evidence which received almost 2,500 responses.

The Commission found many examples of excellent practice. These include:

- the Holocaust Educational Trust with its *Lessons from Auschwitz* programme, ambassadors, outreach and teacher training.
- the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust which runs Holocaust Memorial Day and helps to organise over 2,400 activities each year in schools and local communities.
- the Anne Frank Trust UK with its ambassadors, outreach work and touring exhibitions.
- world-class research, teacher education, MA, PhD and “Beacon Schools” programmes pioneered by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education and supported by Pears Foundation and the Department for Education.
- the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London, visited by 960,000 people last year alone.
- the National Holocaust Centre near Newark, with its outstanding targeted exhibitions for schoolchildren and its partnership work with USC Shoah Foundation and the Kigali Genocide Memorial in Rwanda.
- the world-leading collections at The Wiener Library, supported by Pears Foundation.
- a number of significant regional exhibitions including at the London Jewish Cultural Centre, the Jewish Museum London, the Manchester Jewish Museum and the Lake District Holocaust Project.

The Commission also carried out a detailed study of best practice from around the world. In an analysis of over 70 existing Holocaust memorials from across Europe and America, the Commission was inspired by the interactive and informative nature of the glass towers of the memorial in Boston and by the living memorial approach adopted by those countries with learning centres and museums as part of their memorials.

The Commission was also impressed by the outstanding use of space and technology in the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York; by the strength of the academic hub around both the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem in Israel; and the collection of testimony and innovative use of technology being pioneered by USC Shoah Foundation in California.

In all these places commemoration is informed by learning, with profound results.

### 3. Findings

Drawing on the Call for Evidence and its audit and analysis of existing provision, the Commission has identified four fundamental gaps in Britain's current efforts to commemorate and educate about the Holocaust.

#### **(i) Widespread dissatisfaction with the current national memorial in Hyde Park**

The current national memorial in Hyde Park is wholly inadequate. It is not widely known about; felt to be hidden out of sight; provides no context or information; and stands on its own offering no opportunity to learn more. The strength of feeling on this was very clear, particularly from many of our Holocaust survivors.

#### **(ii) Effective Holocaust education fails to reach significant numbers of young people**

Despite the strength of Britain's existing network of Holocaust educational organisations, privileged access to new research from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education shows that the majority of young people do not know some of the most fundamental facts that explain why and how the Holocaust happened, even after studying it at school. Typically, secondary school students have little understanding of: who was responsible beyond Hitler and the Nazis; where the Holocaust took place; the scale of the murder; or even why the Holocaust happened, with all victim groups being explained away by a general "racism" or "prejudice".

The Call for Evidence also revealed significant examples of the Holocaust not being sufficiently prioritised by schools and many teachers feeling confused over the aims of Holocaust education and ill-equipped to teach the subject.

#### **(iii) Inadequate support for regional projects compounded by a lack of long-term funding for Holocaust education**

The Call for Evidence was clear that more needs to be done to support education and commemoration at a regional level. Many organisations face constant uncertainties about their funding, making it difficult to plan for the future, while potential local projects often struggle to find funding at all. Furthermore, competition for funding between different organisations and projects is often an obstacle to effective collaboration and sharing of resources which would be particularly beneficial for regional projects.

#### **(iv) The testimony of survivors and liberators needs to be urgently recorded and appropriately preserved**

A number of projects have recorded survivor testimony over the years but there is no single database of what testimonies exist and many of these recordings will not be accessible as technology moves on. The window for making new recordings and preserving essential first-hand testimony is rapidly closing. More work is also needed to translate many written testimonies into English.

## 4. Recommendations

To address the gaps identified in the findings from the Call for Evidence, the Commission is making four main recommendations together with a proposed plan for delivery.

### **(i) A striking and prominent new National Memorial**

The evidence is clear that there should be a striking new memorial to serve as the focal point of national commemoration of the Holocaust. It should be prominently located in Central London to make a bold statement about the importance Britain places on preserving the memory of the Holocaust. This will stand as a permanent affirmation of the values of our society.

The design of the National Memorial should be guided by a number of principles.

The National Memorial should:

- be a place where people can pay their respects, contemplate, think and offer prayers.
- take the form of something people can interact with.
- provide factual information about what happened, linked to other resources.
- tell the story of Britain's own connection to the Holocaust.
- convey the enormity of the Holocaust and its impact; in particular the loss to mankind of the destruction of European Jewry.
- reflect the centrality of the murder of European Jews to Nazi objectives.
- appropriately represent the fate of other victims of Nazi persecution.

But it is also clear that a memorial on its own is not enough and that there must be somewhere close at hand where people can go to learn more.

### **(ii) A World-Class Learning Centre at the heart of a campus driving a network of national educational activity**

The Commission proposes that the National Memorial should be co-located with a world-class Learning Centre. This would be a must-see destination using the latest technology to engage and inspire vast numbers of visitors and the Commission has been working to develop initial concepts with pro bono support from Oscar-winning British company Framstore.

A critical part of the vision for the Learning Centre is that it would also be responsible for developing a physical campus and an online hub. This would bring together a network of the UK's existing Holocaust education partners and support them in driving a renewed national effort to advance Holocaust education in every part of the country. In doing so, one of the objectives of the Learning Centre would also be to help people understand the way the lessons of the Holocaust apply more widely, including to other genocides.

The Learning Centre should include a lecture theatre, classrooms and the opportunity for those who want it to locate their offices, or set up satellite offices, within the wider physical campus. The Commission also recommends that the Learning Centre should include the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition, upgraded and expanded. This would, of course, require the consent of the IWM Board of Trustees at the appropriate time.

The online hub would support a network of Holocaust education partners enabling them to work together, sharing expertise, resources and best practice, wherever they are located across the whole of the United Kingdom. It would also provide a single access point for educational resources, research and testimony, clearly signposting teaching and learning materials from trusted sources.

In driving a renewed national effort to extend high quality Holocaust education to all parts of the country, the Learning Centre and its partners would seek to transform the way Holocaust education is delivered.

At the heart of this is the use of technology in developing innovative ways to educate young people in the classroom. This would include taking some of the technology developed for use in the Learning Centre and making it available around the UK.

BAFTA-winning British production company Atlantic Productions has also offered to work with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, and other sites of the Holocaust, to use their world-leading laser scanning technology and software. They have previously scanned and digitally preserved world heritage sites such as the Egyptian Pyramids, Petra and St Paul's Cathedral, and uncovered previously unknown facts to advance the world's understanding, even when all that remains is now buried or ruins. By working with foundations like Auschwitz-Birkenau and others, they would create a permanent digital record of the past and provide valuable information for its future preservation. The digital imagery would also be a valuable tool in sharing stories and educating children and families worldwide.

The Learning Centre would also support headteachers and others to champion Holocaust education by:

- working with Teaching Schools and other partners to promote the benefits of Holocaust education.
- increasing the accessibility and affordability of teacher training.
- assisting professional bodies to incorporate lessons from the Holocaust into their training.
- further advancing the UK's position as a recognised international centre of Holocaust excellence in education, research and study, including through the creation of a professorial chair.
- achieving greater consistency over the objectives of Holocaust education.

The Commission has sought to clarify a crowded space of initiatives and objectives with five key learning outcomes that should be the aim of all education on the Holocaust for people of all ages.

Specifically, Holocaust education should deliver:

- knowledge of the historical facts.
- appreciation of roles and responsibilities.
- understanding of the way the lessons of the Holocaust apply more widely, including to other genocides.
- recognition of the humanity of the victims.
- promotion of greater tolerance and respect.

Finally, the Learning Centre would support its partners in working with leading international institutions to advance the global effort. To assist with this, on its visit to Israel with the Prime Minister, the Commission signed a joint letter of intent to enable greater co-operation between British Holocaust organisations and Yad Vashem.

The Commission has also agreed a partnership between the UK's new National Memorial and Learning Centre and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, including joint work on genocide prevention.

The Commission believes that new partners in Africa and Asia should also be sought to extend the global consensus on the commemoration and education of the Holocaust as set out in the Stockholm Declaration of 2000. The Commission also believes the UK should seek to formalise these partnerships with an international summit in London to mark the opening of the Learning Centre within the next Parliament.

### **(iii) An endowment fund to secure the long-term future of Holocaust Education – including the new Learning Centre and projects across the country**

At the core of the activity generated by the Learning Centre would be an enduring funding proposition in the form of an endowment fund. This fund should not impact or jeopardise existing government funding that organisations receive, but would cover the running costs of the Learning Centre and guarantee funding for its mission to support Holocaust education around the country for generations to come. This would be fundamental in ensuring that local projects and travelling exhibitions can be supported and that the National Memorial and Learning Centre in London is at the heart of a truly national network of activity.

In administering the endowment fund, the Learning Centre's trustees would be expected to ensure maximum value for money. This would include requiring organisations to work together more collaboratively across the network, removing duplication and enhancing the impact of the whole sector.

### **(iv) An urgent programme to record and preserve the testimony of British Holocaust survivors and liberators**

Prior to the creation of the new Learning Centre, action should be taken immediately to complete the task of recording and preserving the first hand testimony of British Holocaust survivors and liberators. This should begin with an urgent audit of existing testimony and an assessment of the steps needed to migrate recordings to future technology platforms. Where new recordings are needed, they should be filmed in the highest definition available, in the purest form, with the greatest possible versatility to be adaptable for continued use as technology evolves. The full range of options should be explored including the use of advanced filming techniques to capture the experience of interacting with a survivor.

Pioneering work has already begun to make this possible. This includes the partnership between USC Shoah Foundation and the National Holocaust Centre near Newark, and the pro bono work of Atlantic Productions who have been supporting the Commission in developing and testing the future-proofing of survivor testimony.



## 5. Delivery and Next Steps

The Commission's final recommendation is the immediate creation of a permanent independent body. This organisation would oversee the establishment of the new National Memorial and Learning Centre, run that Centre and administer the endowment fund. It would be supported by advisory panels of experts including Holocaust survivors and members of the Commission's Youth Forum, selected from more than 700 young people who submitted essays to the Commission as part of the Call for Evidence.

The first tasks for this permanent body should be to take forward the urgent programme on survivor testimony, secure the money needed to deliver these recommendations and identify a prominent location for the new National Memorial and Learning Centre.

The Commission proposes that the permanent body seek to raise money from business and private philanthropy and that the government should match this, pound for pound, up to an agreed limit.

The Commission is also eager to see progress on a site for the National Memorial and Learning Centre and has identified three possible locations that should be considered as part of a consultation. Each has distinct advantages and challenges and they are not the only possible sites, but they are offered here as tangible possibilities that can capture the essence of the vision set out in this report.

- **The Imperial War Museum London** has proposed the building of a new wing to house a memorial and a learning centre which would link to newly expanded and upgraded Holocaust galleries in the main building. This would benefit from being able to use the existing visitor facilities and essential infrastructure of the IWM building. The IWM also benefits from existing high visitor numbers – almost 1.5 million last year – of which 960,000 visited the Holocaust galleries. The Commission believes this is a viable option, provided a way can be found to meet the Commission's vision for a prominent and striking memorial.
- **Potters Field:** Berkeley Group is developing a site on the riverfront between Tower Bridge and City Hall. The large cultural space potentially available within this development could accommodate the components of a learning centre in an area that attracts locals and tourists in huge numbers. Potters Field Park sits immediately in front of the building on the South Bank and would be an iconic location for a world renowned memorial. Such a memorial would need to fit well with the surroundings and invite people to interact and engage with it, in the style of the New England Holocaust Memorial in Boston, USA, and so add to the appeal of the park, rather than detract from it. The Park is managed by a Trust and local residents would need to be fully consulted.
- **Millbank:** David and Simon Reuben have been inspirational supporters of the Commission's vision and have proposed a redevelopment of a large area of their Millbank complex. The location offers significant potential for a prominent riverfront memorial, next to Tate Britain and a short walk along the river from the Houses of Parliament. The campus could include a hidden garden, reflective pond, wall of remembrance and a learning centre, incorporating the existing cinema, doubling as a lecture theatre. This proposal could have broader advantages for Tate Britain – which currently receives almost 1.4 million visitors a year – helping to create a new cultural and educational quarter.

The Commission had the privilege of meetings with former US President Jimmy Carter and the chair of his US Commission, Professor Elie Wiesel. The US Commission which they established in the late 1970s led – after a long 14 years – to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

Nearly four decades later and with more and more survivors passing away, Britain simply cannot afford this kind of delay in delivery. The Commission would like to see survivor testimony recording completed this year, the creation of the National Memorial in 2016/17 and the Learning Centre within the next parliament.

The Commission plans to meet annually until it is satisfied that its recommendations have been fully implemented.

Throughout its work, the Commission has been grateful for the strong support of all three main political parties and the personal involvement of Michael Gove, Ed Balls and Simon Hughes in forming these recommendations. The Commission hopes that each of the party leaders will now join in a clear and unequivocal cross-party commitment to take these recommendations forward, so that this work can begin immediately and the legacy of our country's Holocaust survivors can be secured for generations to come.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

“There will be a time when it won’t be possible for survivors to go into our schools and to talk about their experiences, and to make sure we learn the lessons of the dreadful events that happened. And so, the sacred task is to think, ‘How are we best going to remember, to commemorate and to educate future generations of children?’ In 50 years’ time, in 2064, when a young British Christian child or a young British Muslim child or a young British Jewish child wants to learn about the Holocaust, and we as a country want them to learn about the Holocaust, where are they going to go? Who are they going to listen to? What images will they see? How can we make sure in 2064 that it is as vibrant and strong a memory as it is today?”

David Cameron, Prime Minister, 27 January 2014

The Prime Minister’s Holocaust Commission was launched at a reception for Holocaust survivors in Downing Street on Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January 2014.

Speaking about the incredible work done by Britain’s Holocaust survivors and looking ahead to a time when they will no longer be able to go in to schools and share their testimony, Prime Minister David Cameron gave the Commission a sacred task: to examine what more should be done in Britain to ensure that the memory of the Holocaust is preserved and that the lessons it teaches are never forgotten.

The urgency of this vital task became ever clearer when during the course of the Commission’s work, one of the members of its Expert Group on Commemoration, Jack Kagan, suffered a stroke. In 1943 Jack escaped from Novogrodek Ghetto in what is today Belarus. He survived the remainder of the Nazi occupation as a member of the Bielski brothers’ partisans in the forest. The stroke he suffered forced him to withdraw not just from the Commission, but from the important work he was doing, sharing his testimony with people up and down the country and throughout Europe.

This report is dedicated to our friend Jack, and to thousands like him who made Britain their home and who have contributed so much to their adopted country. The Commission has been fortunate to meet a great many of them and is determined to keep their memory alive for generations to come.

## Why is it important to remember the Holocaust?

“To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.”

Elie Wiesel – Night

The Commission began by establishing why the Holocaust should be remembered and, in particular, why it should matter to Britain.

### Ensuring the voices of survivors are not replaced by those of deniers

Seventy years on from the liberation of the camps, there are people today who try to diminish the gravity of what happened or even try to deny that this systematic attempt to destroy an entire people actually took place at all.

It was a sad inevitability that during the course of its public consultation, the Commission received a few submissions from ‘revisionists’ and out-right Holocaust deniers. They represented only a tiny proportion of the almost 2,500 responses, but nevertheless are an indication of attitudes to the Holocaust that do exist, whether as a result of simple ignorance, the influence of certain political agendas or straightforward antisemitism.

Those who have been fortunate enough to sit before a survivor and listen to them describe their experience can surely never doubt the terrible truth of what happened. But as the events of the Holocaust become more remote and there is no one left who can say, “*I was there*” there is the risk that the narratives of the deniers may become more widespread. The plea to “never forget” becomes more pressing.

### Preventing the normalising of prejudices

“Remembering the Holocaust is not just a history lesson. It is one of the greatest antidotes we have to antisemitism and extremism of all kinds.”

Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, 12 January 2015

Over the course of more than two thousand years of persecution, antisemitism became socialised and acceptable in many pre-war European societies. In some parts of the world it remains so to this day. For centuries, in many countries, pogroms and expulsions became the default response to internal crises. Something so firmly rooted in religious belief, social mores, and culture is very difficult to remove and there is much work still to be done to rid societies of this prejudice. Holocaust education can help prevent the seeds of prejudice from taking root.

This has come into sharp focus with the rising tide of antisemitism once again sweeping across Europe. Recent months have seen the murders at the Jewish Museum in Brussels, the killing of a Rabbi as he walked to synagogue in Antwerp, the migration of Jewish communities in fear of growing discrimination and, most recently, the deaths of four hostages in a kosher supermarket in Paris. While the situation in the UK is better than in many other countries, there has been a worrying increase in antisemitic incidents here too – from high-profile gestures on the football pitch and attacks on Jewish charity shops to the recent criminal damage in Hackney. The Community Security Trust, an organisation that looks after the safety and security needs of the Jewish community, recorded more than 1,000 incidents last year, making 2014 the worst year on record.

## Learning the lessons

A small number of people responded to the Commission by questioning the value of dwelling on the past. With thousands of people around the world suffering today, these respondents say we should move on and focus on what is happening now.

But it is precisely because genocides have happened since and can happen again that the lessons from the Holocaust are so important.

The story of the destruction of European Jewry is not purely a Jewish tragedy: the Holocaust is a lesson and warning to all people of all faiths and lands for all times.

The Jewish story could be the story of any people who are victimised by stronger persecutors, whether in their hundreds or millions. We preserve its memory, we curate its education and we encourage its study because the story of the suffering and details of the stages of this wicked enterprise can help future generations, whoever and wherever they are. Through its study, future generations can understand not just what happened at Auschwitz and the other extermination camps, but how this came to happen; how vicious words and ideas led ultimately to deportations, ghettos, gas chambers and mass graves – and the involvement of ordinary citizens in this murder of their neighbours.

“Not long ago, and not far from where we live, ordinary people across Europe became complicit in the murder of their neighbours.”

Paul Salmons, UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

While the Holocaust was unprecedented and should never be seen as equivalent to other genocides, we see many of the same steps from prejudice to persecution in other atrocities, like those in Rwanda and Bosnia, or the crimes of ISIL today. The circumstances are always different, but that only makes the study of the Holocaust more important. It provides a lens, a window, a light that allows us to watch, measure, illuminate and understand the emerging signs of the acceptance of hatred and the stages of prejudice ultimately turning to violence. Indeed, the poisonous words and passive acceptance of discrimination which marked the beginning of the Holocaust can clearly be found in the ideology of extremism or, the hatred that underpins antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and homophobia today.

“To teach children the idea of ‘never again’ students should be educated about other genocides to learn the contemporary relevance of the lessons from the Holocaust.”

Wembley Stadium Survivors’ Consultation

## The Holocaust as part of British history

Ensuring the memory and the lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten lies at the heart of Britain’s values as a nation.

But the full history is not well known. For most people, Britain’s relationship with the Holocaust is seen through the eyes of survivors, refugees or children who arrived on the ‘Kindertransport’, those who have rebuilt their lives in the UK. It is largely a positive story of resilience and rebuilding.

Anita Lasker-Wallfisch is one such survivor, who came to Britain in 1945. Her talent as a cellist saved her from certain death. She went from playing for SS officers to co-founding the English Chamber Orchestra.

For those who came to Britain on the Kindertransport nothing would replace the family they lost, yet in spite of their situation many overcame great hurdles and contributed hugely to the fabric of British life – the armed forces, nursing, education – and several became Nobel Prize winners.

One contributor to the Call for Evidence explained:

“My father is extremely patriotic and loves this country. He will always be very grateful for the kindness shown to him when he came to Britain as a child survivor.”

It was the British armed forces that liberated Bergen-Belsen, discovering 50-60,000 inmates,<sup>1</sup> many of whom were dying of starvation and disease, and the bodies of thousands more who had already succumbed. Images that exist of the liberation are horrifying beyond all imagination. For months, British medical staff and soldiers strove to return to health those inmates who survived the terrible first days of the liberation. One of those British soldiers was Bernard Levy, whom Commissioners were honoured to accompany back to Bergen-Belsen to pay their respects and hear him bravely recall his painful experiences.

We must also remember the courage and kindness of the unsung heroes whose strong belief in British values, and readiness to reach out a hand, breached the divide rather than put up a wall. Frank Foley and Sir Nicholas Winton are just two whose extraordinary deeds of courage and bravery saved so many. They deserve our lasting respect and eternal gratitude.

After the war, the British welcomed thousands more survivors, including 1,000 young survivors of the Nazi concentration camps. These survivors included many who would go on to contribute substantially to British life, such as the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, a leading voice in the field of interfaith. They also included Ben Helfgott MBE, who went on to become a champion weightlifter, representing Britain at two Olympic Games. Ben's expertise has been invaluable to the Commission as a member of its Expert Groups.

However, Britain's story was not wholly positive. From 1933 to 1938, Britain, like most democratic governments in Europe, turned a blind eye to the growing persecution in Germany. Antisemitism was also present on the streets of Britain. The British Union of Fascists was active from 1932, engaging in acts of violence against Jewish people and buildings, particularly in the East End of London.



*Photo courtesy of Nicky Russell-Smith*

<sup>1</sup> Bergen-Belsen Memorial <http://bergen-belsen.stiftung-ng.de/en/history.html>

As the number of Jewish refugees from Germany increased during the 1930s, there was constant pressure to restrict immigration, mainly due to high unemployment. In 1938 Britain relaxed its domestic immigration controls and allowed 50,000 refugees to enter the UK. But at the Evian Conference in France that year, Britain, along with all but one of the 32 countries attending, refused to accept more refugees in any significant numbers.

In addition, Britain controlled Palestine where it was overseeing the development of a Jewish National Home. Over 60,000 Jews emigrated there. However, in 1937 violence in the region led Britain to curb Jewish immigration.

After the outbreak of war, the British government banned all immigration from Nazi-occupied territories. Those who had managed to get into the country were put into internment camps in places such as the Isle of Man and Sandwich in Kent, often alongside Nazi sympathisers.

It is now clear that, from the summer of 1941, the governments in London and Washington knew that mass murder was taking place. In December 1942 the Allied governments issued a solemn declaration condemning the extermination of the Jews. Yet, despite knowledge of the 'Final Solution' and pleas for help, there was no real effort by the Allies to rescue the Jews of Europe. The Allies argued that they did not have the capacity to conduct accurate air raids on Nazi camps. They felt that a speedy victory in the war was the best method to put a stop to the Nazi atrocities and to save the Jewish people.

“Whilst Britain could have done more, no one can deny that when other European countries were rounding up their Jews and putting them on trains to concentration camps, Britain provided a safe haven for tens of thousands of refugees. In 1941, with Europe overrun and America not yet in the war, just one country – Britain – soldiered on, against all odds, fighting not just for our freedom, but for the world’s liberty too. I believe this period defines Britain and what it means to be British. It is Britain’s unique response to the Holocaust and its unique role in the war that gives us the right to claim a particular attachment to the values of democracy, equality, freedom, fairness and tolerance.”

Ian Austin MP

It is easy to make judgments in hindsight, but Britain was one of the few countries which offered some sanctuary, and alongside France was the only country to declare war on Nazi Germany without having been attacked.

It is clear that Britain has a unique relationship with this terrible period of history. This motivates innovative projects to spread the lessons of tolerance and the need to stand up to prejudice throughout our country and around the world. In so doing, we reach for the ultimate prize of building a nation of empathetic citizens with tolerance for the beliefs and cultures of others. But eternal vigilance is required to instil this in every generation.





## 2. HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AND COMMEMORATION TODAY

The Commission was clear at the outset that it should not make recommendations that would duplicate or undermine existing work being done across the UK.

So the first task was to carry out a detailed audit of what Britain already does, alongside a study of best practice in other countries. This was informed by a Call for Evidence, which received almost 2,500 responses.

In addition to an online consultation, the Commission and partner organisations ran a number of public consultation events. This included events hosted by the Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, the National Holocaust Centre near Newark, the National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups in Birmingham, The Wiener Library, the Jewish Museum London, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, the London Jewish Cultural Centre; and the Faiths Forum for London together with the Council of Christians and Jews also hosted an interfaith panel in London.

The Commission also organised one of the largest gatherings of survivors in British history, generously hosted by The Football Association at Wembley Stadium. 450 people shared their views on what should be recommended. It was an extraordinary privilege to hear from so many remarkable individuals.



*Photo courtesy of Holocaust Educational Trust*

The Call for Evidence also included a youth essay competition which received more than 700 entries. Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Elie Wiesel selected Charlotte Cohen to become the Youth Commissioner.

The Commission also held a number of international meetings, including at the White House and the United Nations, with former US President Jimmy Carter and with the leaders of a wide range of Holocaust institutions from around the world.

This chapter sets out the main elements of what already exists in Britain to support Holocaust commemoration and education.

## Memorials

Britain's first public memorial to the victims of the Holocaust was unveiled in 1983. It sits near the Dell in Hyde Park and consists of two large boulders lying in a gravel bed. It is inscribed, in both English and Hebrew, with the words

*"Holocaust Memorial Garden: For these I weep. Streams of tears flow from my eyes because of the destruction of my people".*

The best known statue relating to the Holocaust in this country is the *Kindertransport – the Arrival* memorial. It was unveiled in 2006 in Liverpool Street Station, the station into which many of the Kinder arrived. The accompanying plaque reads:



Image: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyde\\_Park\\_Holocaust\\_memorial](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyde_Park_Holocaust_memorial)

### ***Children of the Kindertransport***

*In gratitude to the people of Britain for saving the lives of 10,000 unaccompanied mainly Jewish children who fled from Nazi persecution in 1938 and 1939.*

*"Whosoever rescues a single soul is credited as though they had saved the whole world."*

*Talmud*



Image: <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3328291>

In addition, the Commission is aware of almost 100 local memorials and plaques to the Holocaust around the UK. These range from statues of individuals, such as that of Bergen-Belsen liberator Freddie Gilroy in Scarborough, to numerous plaques, often in schools and synagogues. There are also several small memorial gardens and 500 trees planted in different locations dedicated to Anne Frank.

One notable travelling memorial was the *6 million+* project which toured the UK from 2007 to 2011. Kirklees Council initiated a project through the Huddersfield Art Gallery to collect six million buttons and commissioned an art installation to commemorate the Holocaust and other victims of Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides. The installation is now made up of over six million individual buttons, donated by people from across the UK – and there are plans to build Yorkshire’s first public Holocaust memorial based on this installation.



*6 million+ at Huddersfield Art Gallery  
Photo courtesy of Kirklees Council*

## Commemoration

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is the international day of remembrance for the Holocaust. Since 2001 the **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** has promoted and supported events around the UK to mark the day, with more than 2,400 local activities taking place on or around 27 January last year.

HMD demonstrates that the Holocaust is relevant to everyone in the UK today. It provides a focus – through the national event and local events and activities – for people to think about the continuing repercussions of the Holocaust for society. HMD also remembers other victims of the Nazis and subsequent genocides.

Yom HaShoah is the Jewish day of remembrance held each year in April or May. **Yom HaShoah UK** is the organisation which holds a ceremony at the memorial in Hyde Park and in Jewish communities across the UK.

## Exhibitions

The **Imperial War Museum’s** highly regarded Holocaust Exhibition in London has received over 4 million visits since it opened in June 2000. It runs a learning programme that supports the education of school students. It also provides learning support for 21,000 UK school students who visit the exhibition.

“The proportion of visits to IWM London who choose to visit the Holocaust Exhibition has risen from 39% in 2007 to 64% in 2013.”

Imperial War Museum

There are also exhibitions at the **National Holocaust Centre** near Newark in Nottinghamshire, which received a great deal of praise in the Commission's Call for Evidence. Commissioners were particularly moved by *The Journey*, an exhibition designed specifically for primary school children. Through this exhibition, pupils experience the way life changes through the eyes of a Jewish child in 1930s Germany, and hear personally from a Holocaust survivor.

Using the history of genocide as a model of how society can break down, the Centre also emphasises how current and future generations must carefully examine and learn from these tragedies.

There are also smaller exhibitions around the country, for example the **Lake District Holocaust Project** has a highly respected exhibition at Windermere Library. *Auschwitz to Ambleside*, describes the story of the 300 child Holocaust survivors who arrived in the Lake District in 1945. The **Jewish Museum London** has an exhibition which commemorates the life of Leon Greenman OBE, an English-born Auschwitz survivor who devoted his life to speaking about his experiences and campaigning against racism until his death in 2008. The **Manchester Jewish Museum** also has a Holocaust collection and plans to create a Holocaust museum for the North. **The Wiener Library** displays temporary and touring exhibitions of its collections, which encourage people of all backgrounds to think critically about the issues raised by the Holocaust and genocide.

## Education in schools

There are several organisations which provide educational resources on the Holocaust for schools, including the **Holocaust Memorial Day Trust** and the **Imperial War Museum**.

The **Holocaust Educational Trust** works in schools, colleges and universities across the UK. Since 1999 over 25,000 students and teachers have participated in the government funded *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project, a four-part course for post-16 students which includes a one-day visit to the Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. The Trust's Ambassador Programme builds on these visits, offering students opportunities to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust and to be advocates for Holocaust education and remembrance.

In addition, 90,000 students a year take part in the Trust's Outreach Programme, which allows both students and teachers the opportunity to hear first-hand survivor testimony.

The **Anne Frank Trust UK** draws on the power of Anne Frank's life and diary to challenge prejudice and reduce hatred, encouraging people to embrace positive attitudes, responsibility and respect for others. Anne Frank exhibitions have been visited by over 2.8 million people from across Britain.

## Holocaust in the National Curriculum

**Primary School:** There is no prescription to cover the Holocaust at primary school age, but there are opportunities. For example, there is a requirement to teach events beyond living memory that are significant nationally or globally and events commemorated through festivals or anniversaries.

**Key Stage 3:** Since 1991, Holocaust education has been compulsory at Key Stage 3 (aged 11-14). In the new history programme of study it is a requirement within the broader heading of 'challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day'. How much time teachers are required to teach the subject is not specified and it is up to schools to decide, within a broad and balanced curriculum.

**GCSE History:** Around 38% of pupils continue studying history at GCSE. What topics are taught is at the discretion of the teacher based on GCSE specifications produced by awarding organisations. From 2016, students will have to cover medieval, early modern and modern history – rather than focusing only on modern world history.

**A-level History:** From 2016, students must study topics from a chronological range of at least 200 years. As with GCSE, this means a widening of the potential time ranges for topics within the A-level curriculum, although the Holocaust is still expected to be a popular area of study.

## Research, teacher education and development

A number of organisations provide professional development training for teachers, including the **National Holocaust Centre**, the **Imperial War Museum** and **Facing History and Ourselves**. One of the largest programmes is run by the **Holocaust Educational Trust**, supporting more than 1,000 trainee and practising teachers each year. The Trust also runs a Teacher Study Visit series which gives British teachers the opportunity to learn from international experts.

In establishing and supporting the **UCL Centre for Holocaust Education**, **Pears Foundation**, together with the Department for Education has created a bridge between academia and the classroom.

The Centre is part of UCL's Institute of Education, ranked number one worldwide for education in the QS 2014 World University Rankings. It is the only institution in the world to combine large-scale national research into the challenges of teaching and learning about the Holocaust, with programmes specifically designed to meet these classroom needs.

There are around 16,000 secondary school history teachers. Since 2009, approximately 4,000 teachers have benefited from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's professional development programme. The Centre targets the particular needs of teachers at different stages in their career.

It also makes its expertise available to a range of national and international institutions (e.g. the Imperial War Museum, Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, UNESCO and USC Shoah Foundation). It is fast becoming an international hub for collaboration, evaluation and consultation and is recognised as a world-leading institution for the development of research, teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

The **Holocaust Research Centre at Royal Holloway, University of London** is the leading academic centre of its kind in Europe and is internationally recognised for its research, teaching, public advocacy and creative work. The Research Centre's mission is to promote research into the Holocaust, its origins and aftermath, and to examine the extent to which genocide, war and dictatorship can be understood as defining elements in the history of the twentieth century.

**The Wiener Library** is Britain's largest and most extensive library and archive on the Holocaust and Nazi era. It has been collecting material related to the Holocaust, its causes and legacies since 1933. It now houses approximately 65,000 books and pamphlets, 2,000 document collections, over 17,000 photographs, and over 3,000 titles of periodicals, as well as audio-visual testimonies, press cuttings, posters and some objects. The library provides research support for undergraduate and postgraduate study.

Several other universities also offer opportunities for further learning in this field through undergraduate modules and full postgraduate degrees.



*Photo courtesy of The Wiener Library*

## Survivor Organisations

Survivors are supported by a number of organisations providing advice, care services and friendship. These organisations actively support survivors to share their testimony, connecting their members with schools and centres of Holocaust learning like the **National Holocaust Centre**.

The **'45 Aid Society Holocaust Survivors and Second Generation** is a charitable organisation formed by Holocaust survivors who came to the UK in 1945 as children and teenagers having lost their parents. It plays a prominent part in Holocaust education and spreading a message of tolerance. Members of the Society frequently present their testimonies in schools and universities. Its Second Generation group is made up of children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors who keep these stories alive through community events, educational activities and fundraising.

**The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR)** provides social, welfare and care services to Jewish victims of Nazi oppression living in Great Britain. AJR members can obtain advice and assistance on welfare rights as well as on Holocaust reparations. As well as supporting educational, research and commemorative projects, the AJR has produced several resources that will help create the legacy of the Jewish refugees and survivors, shedding light on how they rebuilt their lives and their remarkable contributions to Britain.

The **Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association (HSFA)** is a Leeds-based charity set up in 1996 to preserve the memory, testimony and records of the Holocaust survivors based in Yorkshire, England. The HSFA provides friendship and support to Holocaust survivors, who regularly visit schools, colleges, universities, community groups and other organisations to give living witness accounts of their personal experiences.

The **Jewish Care Holocaust Survivors' Centre** is the only centre designed specifically for Holocaust survivors in the UK, offering a programme of social, cultural and therapeutic events. It also provides for Jewish refugees from the former Yugoslavia.

### Holocaust commemoration in other countries

The Commission also carried out a detailed study of best practice from around the world, including visits to Washington and New York, Jerusalem, Berlin, the **Bergen-Belsen Memorial** and **Auschwitz-Birkenau**. In all, the Commission undertook an analysis of over 70 existing Holocaust memorials and found inspiration in many. In particular, the Commission was impressed by the interactive and informative nature of the glass towers of the **New England Holocaust Memorial** in Boston. This simple design consists of six glass towers, each representing one of the six extermination camps. A path invites the visitor to walk through the towers, one after another. Along the way simple inscriptions provide essential but little known details, including information about Jewish resistance, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, other victims of Nazi persecution, and the treatment and murder of Slavic and Polish people. Each tower displays a quotation from a camp inmate, and inscribed on the towers are the numbers one to six million.

Some countries have adopted a living memorial approach, including learning centres and museums as part of their memorials. The **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** (USHMM) houses exhibitions, permanent and temporary, an exhibition aimed at children, a memorial hall and a centre devoted to educating people about other genocides. Like **Yad Vashem** in Israel, USHMM is at the centre of a network of academic institutions driving research and education.

The Commission was also impressed by the outstanding use of space and technology in the **National September 11 Memorial and Museum** in New York; and the collection of testimony and innovative use of technology being pioneered by **USC Shoah Foundation** in California.

In all these places commemoration is informed by learning, with profound results.



*Yad Vashem, Israel*





## 3. FINDINGS

### Finding 1:

#### **Widespread dissatisfaction with the current national memorial in Hyde Park**

“There is a strong consensus that there remains no memorial in London that is fitting to the enormity of the catastrophe. The monument in the Dell in Hyde Park is insufficient in both its impact and location. When compared with the Animals in War monument in Park Lane, many feel its inadequacy is bordering on offensive. We recognise the need for a new memorial. However it should be more than just an inert statue and must contribute to real education about the Holocaust.”

The Board of Deputies of British Jews

The current national Holocaust memorial in Hyde Park was established by the Board of Deputies of British Jews in 1983, but is no longer felt to be adequate by them or by the overwhelming majority of those who responded to the Call for Evidence.

Survivors themselves feel strongly that the memorial does not represent them or their lost friends and family and that it serves poorly as a focus of commemoration. The memorial has a number of further inadequacies.

- It is neither emotive nor informative. Those who find it by chance will often come away without realising what it is commemorating.
- Most people do not even know the memorial exists. This compares very unfavourably to the high national and international profiles of many other countries' memorials and does nothing to demonstrate the United Kingdom's commitment to “never forget” the Holocaust and to stand up to persecution.
- It is isolated; standing as it does on its own, it offers no opportunity to educate the casual passer-by or to inspire an interest to learn more. There is nothing in the vicinity which provides an opportunity to find out more.

## Finding 2:

# Effective Holocaust education fails to reach significant numbers of young people

### Lack of knowledge

The Commission has been given privileged access to emerging results from the world's largest ever study of young people's knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust conducted by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. This research draws on 8,000 survey responses and follow-up interviews with more than 300 students across all years of secondary school education in England.

Encouragingly, there is strong interest in learning about this history: 77% of students report learning about the Holocaust at school, and of these 88% think other pupils should learn about the Holocaust, 70% want to learn more and 84.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, "the Holocaust does not really interest me."

However, whilst more than half of the students surveyed considered that they knew 'quite a lot' or 'lots' about the Holocaust, the research found that **the majority of young people don't know some of the most fundamental facts that explain why and how the Holocaust happened**, even after studying it at school. Typically, secondary school students appear to exhibit little understanding of why the Holocaust happened, with all victim groups being explained away by a general 'racism' or 'prejudice'. Similarly, they showed little understanding of who was responsible for these crimes, or where it happened.

For example, results from students surveyed, who had already studied the Holocaust show:

- When asked who was responsible for the Holocaust, the vast majority think only of Hitler and the Nazis; – more than three-quarters failed to recognise that hundreds of thousands of ordinary citizens were also complicit in this continent-wide genocide. In focus group interviews too, only a minority of students demonstrated understanding that Nazism was a political movement with widespread popular support or that the Holocaust involved the active participation and collaboration of people across Europe.
- More than half of students were unable to identify where the Holocaust took place, believing the killing sites were in Germany rather than in Poland. 55% of survey respondents appear to believe that the largest number of killings of Jewish people took place in Germany. Nazi-occupied Poland was in fact the site of all six of the major killing centres – Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau – and the location with the highest number and concentration of Jewish ghettos.
- A third massively underestimated the scale of the murder of Jewish people, with 10% appearing to believe that no more than 100,000 lives were lost.
- Less than a third of those who had already studied the Holocaust knew the meaning of the term 'antisemitism' as compared to more than half who knew what 'Islamophobia' meant and more than 90% who knew what 'homophobia' meant. Whilst antisemitism alone is clearly not sufficient to explain the Holocaust, any explanation that omits this centuries-old prejudice is fundamentally flawed.

The overall picture is of a concerning lack of knowledge among large numbers of students about some fundamental aspects of the Holocaust. This is further compounded by the challenges that teachers face in addressing this subject.

### Teachers find the Holocaust a challenging subject to teach

The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's 2009 study of Holocaust teaching (based on the responses of more than 2,000 teachers) found that 93% of History teachers believed that the Holocaust will always be important to teach and that 86% thought it should remain in the National Curriculum. However, the research also revealed considerable confusion about the aims of Holocaust education and significant problems with teaching practice.

The research found that very few teachers received specialist professional development, with 83% of teachers considering themselves self-taught. But, it also found that over three quarters of teachers wanted more professional training.

“Many very talented and committed teachers at all levels accept the importance of Holocaust education but lack sufficient training, time and resources.”

Royal Wootton Bassett Academy

While there has been substantial progress, including with the work led by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education together with Pears Foundation, many of the teacher training programmes available are relatively small in scale.

There are around 16,000 History teachers and thousands more teachers in Religious Education, English and Citizenship who have the potential to deliver some form of Holocaust education.

Teachers need to be confident that they understand the objectives of teaching about the Holocaust and they have responses to the many difficult questions the subject can raise. They need to be able to teach the Holocaust effectively, even in the face of time constraints. Teachers would benefit from access to coherent, high quality resources and clearer signposting to the excellent organisations that offer support.

### Holocaust education is not prioritised in schools

The Call for Evidence highlighted that many schools do not prioritise Holocaust education and that this is a major obstacle to improving teaching. Young people particularly felt that schools do not always dedicate enough time to the subject, while teachers feel they often lack support to attend professional training.

There seems to be considerable variation in the amount of time schools devote to Holocaust education, with some schools spending as little as one hour to cover the entire issue.

“If there is insufficient time to teach about the Holocaust then teachers are forced to make difficult choices about what to include, and too often it is the voice of the victims that is lost; the complexity of the past tends to be grossly oversimplified; myths and misconceptions go unchallenged; substantial gaps in pupils’ knowledge result; understandings are shallow; and the danger is that the deep significance of the Holocaust may be lost.”

UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

It is clear that unless headteachers advocate and support Holocaust education the situation will not easily improve.

Some headteachers are deeply committed and provide excellent leadership. They demonstrate what is possible. For example, at the Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, Holocaust education plays a central role within the curriculum and ethos of the school. Their programme has grown into an initiative committed to exposing the evil of prejudice, injustice and hatred in all its forms whilst celebrating civic values.

But the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education has argued that most schools do not make this a priority.

“A major obstacle to improved teaching and learning about the Holocaust is that most schools do not make this a priority. Teachers who want to attend the Centre’s professional development programmes are not given the permission to come out of school because of the costs of supply cover.”

UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

### **Lack of support for academic leaders**

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance representatives praised the high quality and quantity of academic output in the UK. Despite this reputation for academic excellence, there is not a single professorial chair in the UK devoted to the Holocaust. Experts agreed this is a serious gap in the country’s academic provision.

“Scholarly research is the bedrock of all educational activity. It informs all commemorative activity. Archives, galleries, museums depend entirely on prior scholarly research. Unless it is adequately supported and placed on a sustainable basis, all associated activities will suffer.”

Holocaust Research Centre, Royal Holloway, University of London

### **Lack of knowledge among professionals**

Finally, as effective Holocaust education fails to reach significant numbers of young people, so the research suggests that many young people’s ideas about the past are largely informed by common myths, misconceptions and misunderstandings about the Holocaust that are still prevalent across our society today. These go unchallenged by teachers and parents, who are often influenced by the same sources.

And yet, Holocaust education for adults tends to only be available to those who actively seek it out. This is especially concerning in the context of public servants. The Commission is aware of the role played in the Holocaust by people in certain professions. Through silent agreement and tacit support of the regime, many became an integral part of the process that led to genocide.

The Commission recognises the importance of ensuring the lessons of the Holocaust are understood by those training for professions which have the authority and responsibility to either facilitate or stand up to such gradual dismantling of civil liberties. They must understand their responsibilities and the dangers of such creeping discrimination.

### Finding 3:

## Inadequate support for regional projects compounded by a lack of long-term funding for Holocaust education

The Call for Evidence was clear that the United Kingdom benefits from many excellent projects spreading the facts and lessons of the Holocaust across the country.

However, the evidence also illustrated that more needed to be done to link projects up, to remove duplication and to support education and commemoration at a local level. Many organisations face constant uncertainties about their funding, making it difficult to plan for the future, while potential local projects often struggle to find funding at all.

“In our view, Britain lacks a joined-up approach to Holocaust education and the field appears fragmented, with a range of organisations competing for funding and influence.”

The Wiener Library

Evidence from the Commission’s Youth Competition demonstrated a strong sense amongst young people that Holocaust education and commemoration could be greatly enhanced by the creative use of social media, apps for smart devices and other technologies. Financial constraints mean there is little investment in the sort of cutting-edge technology available that could greatly boost the impact of the work these organisations do.

Furthermore, competition for funding between different organisations and projects is often an obstacle to effective collaboration and sharing of resources which would be particularly beneficial for regional projects. This results in the reduced impact of individual initiatives.

“There is undoubtedly scope for all organisations to share resources better and ensure that applications for public money are not duplicated, and that foundations and trusts receive a more coordinated approach.”

The Association of Jewish Refugees

“Connectivity is missing throughout the country for Holocaust resources.”

Lake District Holocaust Project

“There are other organisations and institutions that are doing good work but receiving little or no Government support, and are constantly struggling to fund their core costs.”

Trevor Pears, Pears Foundation



#### Finding 4:

### **The testimony of survivors and liberators needs to be urgently recorded and appropriately preserved**

The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's recent survey of secondary school children in England found that 90% of young people who heard a survivor give their testimony, reported that the experience deepened their knowledge and made the Holocaust seem 'more real' to them.

Many members of the second and third generations support family members to continue this important work and in some cases have themselves taken on the task of sharing this testimony with others. The Commission recognises this valuable contribution.

Much evidence to the Commission called for a sustained effort to collect testimony and to take steps to ensure this was accessible to young people, educators and academics.

A number of projects have recorded survivor testimony over the years and some, like the National Holocaust Centre, continue to do so. USC Shoah Foundation's archive includes a large number of British survivor testimonies. But there is no single database recording what testimonies exist. Many of these recordings will not be accessible as technology moves on. The window for making new recordings and preserving essential first-hand testimony is rapidly closing. More work is also needed to translate written accounts into English.

“Much audio and audio-visual testimony remains locked up due to the lack of compatibility between archival storage and data retrieval systems. It is frustrating that researchers who wish to access the Shoah Foundation archive have to travel to Royal Holloway in Egham to access the collection... In order to access the vast newly digitised collection of documents of the International Tracing Service (which includes thousands of survivor depositions and testimony recorded in the immediate aftermath of liberation and deposited with the tracing service of the International Committee of the Red Cross) now housed at The Wiener Library, it is necessary to be physically present at the Library.”

Holocaust Research Centre, Royal Holloway University of London





## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the gaps identified in the findings from the Call for Evidence, the Commission is making four main recommendations, together with a proposed plan for delivery.

Recommendation 1:

### **A striking and prominent new National Memorial**

The evidence is clear that there should be a striking new Memorial to serve as the focal point for national commemoration of the Holocaust. It should be prominently located in Central London to attract the largest possible number of visitors and to make a bold statement about the importance Britain places on preserving the memory of the Holocaust. It would stand as a permanent affirmation of the values of British society.

In considering the design of the new Memorial, the Commission debated at length the important question of whether and how to represent the fate of other victims of Nazi persecution. The Commission resolved that, at its heart, the Memorial must represent the experience of the Jewish victims, determinedly and systematically targeted for total destruction, based not on lifestyle or belief system, but on genetic origins.

However, it would be an injustice to the memory of those other victims not to reflect upon their tragic experiences too. Amongst these victims were members of the Roma community, Jehovah's Witnesses, political dissidents, homosexuals and people with mental and physical disabilities. Furthermore, the Commission profoundly believes that understanding of the Holocaust can be strengthened further by learning about the fate of other victims of Nazi persecution.

“The Jewish community also fundamentally believes in the need to show solidarity with the victims of other genocides, both by the Nazis and subsequently.”

The Board of Deputies of British Jews

So the Commission believes it is essential that the new Memorial recognises the persecution of non-Jewish victims, whilst maintaining the centrality of the six million murdered Jews.

The Commission carried out a detailed study of best practice, analysing over 70 existing Holocaust memorials from across Europe and America. A number of these memorials provided strong insights on how to recognise non-Jewish victims.

The Commission was particularly inspired by the interactive and informative nature of the glass towers of the New England Holocaust Memorial in Boston. This design was rich in information, fitted well into the surrounding area and successfully managed to balance reflecting on the victims of other Nazi persecution without undermining the centrality of the Holocaust.

The design of the new National Memorial should be further guided by a number of principles.

The National Memorial should:

- be a place where people can pay their respects, contemplate, think and offer prayers.
- take the form of something people can interact with.
- provide factual information about what happened, linking to other resources.
- tell the story of Britain's own connection with the Holocaust.
- convey the enormity of the Holocaust and its impact and in particular the loss to mankind of the destruction of European Jewry.

But it is also clear that a memorial on its own is not enough and that there must be somewhere close at hand where people can go to learn more about the Holocaust.

“Physical reminders most effectively confront the actuality of this event and remind us of its blunt humanness. From museums and camp memorials, to planted trees and stumbling stones, across the globe these memorials serve as a long standing memento for an event that took the lives of so many.”

Youth Competition Entry



Photo courtesy of JCRC of Greater Boston

## Recommendation 2:

### A world-class Learning Centre at the heart of a campus driving national educational activity

“To ensure that any commemoration that takes place is meaningful, it is crucial that visitors really understand the historical episode itself, and the complexities surrounding it. It is for this reason that we recommend that the memorial features an accompanying learning centre, so that visitors can deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust.”

Holocaust Educational Trust

A new world-class Learning Centre should physically accompany the new National Memorial. This would be a must-see destination using the latest technology to engage and inspire vast numbers of visitors. The Commission has been working to develop some initial concepts with pro bono support from Oscar-winning British company Framestore.

A critical part of the vision for the Learning Centre is that it would also be responsible for developing a physical campus and an online hub, bringing together a network of the UK’s existing Holocaust education partners and supporting them in driving a renewed national effort to advance Holocaust education across the country. In doing so, one of the objectives of the Learning Centre would also be to help people understand the way the lessons of the Holocaust apply more widely, including to other genocides.

The Learning Centre should include facilities to host lectures and seminars and to run educational courses and workshops, as well as the opportunity for Holocaust organisations to locate their offices, or set up satellite offices, within the wider physical campus.

The Commission also recommends that the Learning Centre includes the Imperial War Museum’s Holocaust Exhibition, upgraded and expanded. This would, of course, require the explicit consent of the IWM Board of Trustees at the appropriate time. The Commission welcomes the constructive discussions it has had with the IWM throughout its work – including their bid to host the Learning Centre at their Lambeth site, which is set out in the Delivery and Next Steps chapter alongside other options.

“There should be a Centre for education with professional educators and scholarships to actually educate the educators and carry out research.”

Ziggy Shipper, Survivor

In its study of memorials and learning centres around the world, the Commission was particularly impressed by the outstanding use of space and technology to aid learning and reflection in the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York. This should be an important characteristic of the Learning Centre as captured in this artist’s impression (with thanks to John McAslan and Partners).



*Copyright John McAslan and Partners*

## Online hub

An online hub hosted by the Learning Centre would support a network of Holocaust education partners, enabling them to work together, sharing expertise, resources and best practice, wherever they are located across the whole United Kingdom. It would also provide a single access point for educational resources, research and testimony, directing people to partners' websites and clearly signposting teaching and learning materials from trusted sources.

The new National Memorial and Learning Centre would be at the heart of a physical and virtual campus supporting a network of Holocaust organisations which would collaborate to extend high quality Holocaust education to all parts of the country.

“We would recommend that there be spaces within the centre for teaching and learning, as well as for quiet reflection. Existing organisations could also make use of this space and it could contain exhibits, which would help to contextualise the memorial itself. In order to realise the nationwide Holocaust memorial network, we recommend an accompanying online digital learning centre where interested parties can access the resources of the physical centre, anytime, anywhere.”

Holocaust Educational Trust

## Use of technology to improve Holocaust education

The Commission is convinced of the need to maintain the Holocaust's place as a mandatory part of the National Curriculum, but that alone is not enough.

To further enhance Holocaust education, the Learning Centre and its partners would seek to transform the way it is delivered.

At the heart of this is the use of technology in developing innovative ways to educate young people in the classroom. This would include taking some of the technology developed for use in the Learning Centre and making it available around the UK.

“There should be a digital centre with many touch screens where you could bring up people’s profiles to see who they were and to remember them so that people can really be influenced by the memorial and the sense of loss.”

Youth Competition Entry

The Commission has been working to develop initial concepts with pro bono support from Oscar-winning British company **Framestore**.

Framestore have suggested examples of ways technology could be used to bring the Learning Centre to life.

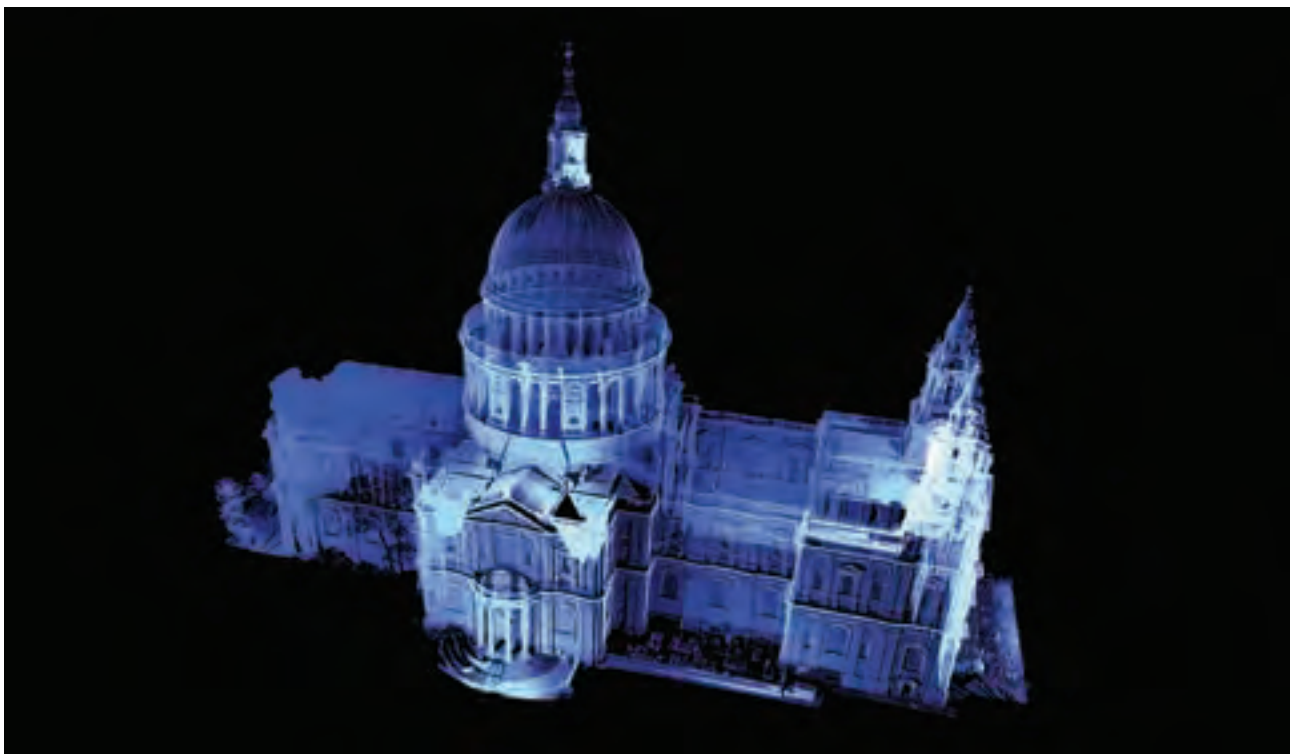
**Digital Journey** – Each visitor would be given details of somebody who lived during the Holocaust. This would include the first part of their story, together with an artefact such as ID papers, a letter or a photo. Using an accompanying mobile app the visitor would start to find out more about this person. At the Learning Centre, special touch points would allow a visitor to follow the person’s story in more detail.

**Smart Tickets** – Throughout the Learning Centre, visitors would be able to use smart devices to access more information and share content online, interacting with digital installations and finding their own links to history. This would be used to customise journeys around the Learning Centre by tracking a visitor’s progress and suggesting other things to see.

**Virtual Reality (VR) Experience** – There would be a space within the Learning Centre where every surface would be projected onto, recreating the schools or streets of 1930s Germany. VR headsets would bring similar 360 immersive experiences into the classroom, recreating scenes from the testimonials of survivors. Video of the survivors within the VR spaces would guide the children through their experiences. These would, of course, only be used sensitively to give children insights into, for example, Jewish communities before the rise of the Nazi party or the lives of Jewish families as discriminatory laws were being introduced. It should categorically not be used to shock people with disturbing experiences of the ghettos or camps.

There are a range of exciting partnerships in this space. The National Holocaust Centre is working with USC Shoah Foundation on interactive testimony.

BAFTA-winning British production company Atlantic Productions has also offered to work with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, and other sites of the Holocaust, to use their world-leading laser scanning technology and software. They have previously scanned and digitally preserved world heritage sites such as the Egyptian Pyramids, Petra and St Paul's Cathedral, and uncovered previously unknown facts to advance the world's understanding, even when all that remains is now buried or ruins. By working with foundations like Auschwitz-Birkenau and others, they would create a permanent digital record of the past and provide valuable information for its future preservation. The digital imagery would also be a powerful tool in sharing stories and educating children and families worldwide.



*Image courtesy of Atlantic Productions*

## **Further improvements in Holocaust education**

In addition to the use of technology, the Learning Centre would support headteachers and others to champion Holocaust education in a number of ways.

### ***Working with Teaching Schools***

Teaching Schools are outstanding schools that work with others to provide high-quality training and development to new and experienced school staff. By March 2016, the Department for Education aims to have a network of 600, making significant improvements in the quality of teaching, leadership and pupil attainment. Teaching Schools regularly take on special commissions such as the Special Educational Needs national reforms and a project to tackle homophobia in schools.

Building on the work that Teaching Schools have done on Special Educational Needs and homophobia, the Learning Centre could formally commission Teaching Schools to work with an organisation such as the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education to create an in-depth programme to promote high quality Holocaust education among their networks and alliances.

To ensure maximum impact throughout the country, geographical ‘cold-spots’ in Holocaust education should be identified. Engagement could then be prioritised in areas where provision is currently weakest.

As part of this work, Teaching Schools could take the lead in the development, testing and dissemination of a research-based model curriculum that can provide tailored education to different age groups. The Commission is deeply conscious of the challenges of engaging young children in such a horrific subject. But given many will encounter stories about the Holocaust away from the classroom, it is important that teachers have the resources to address this subject in an age-appropriate way to prevent misconceptions.

The curriculum should enable teachers to plan lessons and outcomes for each stage with an understanding of progression and a framework for teachers to assess impact. The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s *Spiral Curriculum* provides an example of how a young person’s knowledge of the subject might be developed throughout the course of their school career.

### **UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s proposed *Spiral Curriculum***

As early as Key Stage 2 some pupils are already encountering stories about the Holocaust and beginning to form their ideas about what happened and what it means. So it is important at this young age that teachers provide support and guidance. This may include themes such as prejudice, persecution, refugees and the Kindertransport but would not include details of the camps or mass murder.

Before studying the Holocaust, pupils should already have examined the rich history of the Jewish people and know something about both Judaism and European antisemitism.

At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils would focus primarily on the stories of the victims and survivors, including responses and stories of resistance. This would ensure that the victims are not seen as a faceless, passive mass, and that young people engage with the human dilemmas faced by ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

During Key Stage 4, pupils would focus on conceptual knowledge such as causes and explanation, exploring in more depth the decision-making process, the role of ideology, but also why and how so many became complicit in the murder of their neighbours.

At Key Stage 5, young people would consider the profound legacy of the Holocaust in the modern world.

### ***Increasing the accessibility and affordability of teacher training***

In addition to the work of Teaching Schools, a number of the UK’s leading Holocaust organisations provide valuable teacher training programmes. Given the vital role of training in equipping teachers with the confidence and resources to tackle this very emotive and challenging subject, the Commission believes that more should be done to support the growth and accessibility of these programmes. This could include extending the provision of teacher training in each region to reduce travel times and associated staff costs.



***Promoting to professional bodies the inclusion of training on lessons from the Holocaust***

Education does not only apply to those of school age. The Holocaust may have been authored by the Nazi leadership but it could only be executed with the complicity and actions of broad based society, in particular that part of society who would ordinarily be expected to protect and nurture the downtrodden and the oppressed. Therefore training programmes for people becoming police officers, judges, doctors, nurses and other public servants should include lessons from the Holocaust. This would enable trainees to examine the role their professions played in the Holocaust and challenge them to reflect upon their professional and personal responsibilities in a democracy today.

The National Holocaust Centre provides a good example. It offers training for professionals from a variety of disciplines including the police, prisons, the National Health Service, local authorities and the clergy. Participants are encouraged to rethink their professional attitudes, policies and roles in light of the Holocaust.

Through rigorous investigation of the events that led to the Holocaust and other recent examples of genocide, public servants can choose knowledge over misinformation, compassion over prejudice and participation over indifference or resignation.

***Establishing a professorial chair***

In addition to strengthening education in schools, the Commission believes it is important to further develop the UK's academic excellence in the study of the Holocaust. Academic study is the bedrock of all education and the UK has a number of great strengths including its world-leading reputation for Holocaust educational research. The Call for Evidence exposed the absence of a professorial chair on the Holocaust anywhere in the country. The Commission believes this should be put right and that there would be considerable value in endowing a professorial chair.

There were a number of proposals during the Call for Evidence, ranging from a specialist chair in Holocaust educational research that would build on the UK's world-leading reputation, to the broadest possible approach of a chair in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The Commission sees merit in all of these proposals and challenges the UK's academic community to make the case for where such a potential investment would best be made.

**Learning Outcomes**

To achieve greater consistency across Holocaust education, the Commission has identified five learning outcomes to guide the work of the Learning Centre and which it believes should be the objective of Holocaust education for all ages.

***1: Knowledge of the historical facts***

Of primary importance is that future generations understand the historical facts of the Holocaust. It is such an unimaginable and significant event that people must always understand what happened, why it happened, to whom and what the consequences were. They must understand the enormity of the Holocaust. They must understand the Holocaust in the context of over a thousand years of antisemitism in Europe. They must also learn about the other victims of Nazi persecution.

## ***2: Appreciation of roles and responsibilities***

People must understand who carried out the Holocaust. The Holocaust was not carried out by a few key actors, but with widespread complicity. There is already a great deal of education on perpetrators' roles, but not enough on the role of society and bystanders. People should learn that the Holocaust occurred because individuals, organisations, and governments made choices that validated and legalised discrimination and allowed hatred and, ultimately, mass murder to occur.

## ***3: Understanding of the way the lessons of the Holocaust apply more widely, including to subsequent genocide***

Holocaust education is a key vehicle in understanding genocide today and to prevent it happening in the future. The Holocaust was a particular and unprecedented event, but its lessons are applicable across societal groups and over time.

## ***4: Recognition of the humanity of the victims***

Education should convey the huge loss to humanity of the devastation of the Jewish people. It should seek to restore the humanity of the victims, for example by conveying the richness and value of pre and post-war Jewish communities. Students should also learn about the personal experience of individuals.

## ***5: Promotion of greater tolerance and respect***

Education should prepare young people to become socially responsible adults. Holocaust education should encourage people to question their personal motivations and choices – and to build tolerance and respect for diverse groups in society.

## **Forming enduring partnerships with leading international institutions**

Finally, the Learning Centre would support its partners in working with leading international institutions to advance a global effort. To assist with this, on its visit to Israel with the Prime Minister, the Commission signed a joint letter of intent to enable greater co-operation between British Holocaust organisations and Yad Vashem.

The Commission has also agreed a partnership between the UK's new Memorial and Learning Centre and the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, including joint work on genocide prevention.

The UK Learning Centre would also seek to work with new partners in Africa and Asia to extend the global consensus on the commemoration and education of the Holocaust, as set out in the Stockholm Declaration of 2000. The Commission also believes that within the next Parliament the UK should seek to formalise these partnerships with an international summit in London to mark the opening of the Learning Centre.

### Recommendation 3:

## An endowment fund to secure the long-term future of Holocaust education – including the new Learning Centre and projects across the country

“Create a fund for smaller projects to compete for, on the condition that best practice be shared across the country.”

Sefton Holocaust Memorial Project

At the core of the activity generated by the Learning Centre would be an enduring funding proposition in the form of an endowment fund. This fund should not impact or jeopardise existing government funding that organisations receive, but would cover the running costs of the Learning Centre and guarantee funding for its mission to support Holocaust education around the country for generations to come. This will be fundamental in ensuring that local projects and travelling exhibitions can be supported and that the National Memorial and Learning Centre in London is at the heart of a truly national network of activity, driving improvements in Holocaust education.

In administering the endowment fund, the Learning Centre's trustees would be expected to ensure maximum value for money. This would include requiring organisations to collaborate throughout the network, removing duplication and enhancing the impact of the whole sector.



*Image courtesy of Shadows of Shoah: a travelling Holocaust exhibition in New Zealand  
[www.shadowsofshoah.com](http://www.shadowsofshoah.com)*

“Museum-based access to learning about the Holocaust outside London could be increased... through an imaginative national programme of travelling exhibitions and educational activities, following the model of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's travelling exhibitions programme.”

The Wiener Library

## Recommendation 4:

### **An urgent programme to record and preserve the testimony of British Holocaust survivors and liberators**

Prior to the creation of the new Learning Centre, action should be taken immediately to complete the task of recording and preserving the first hand testimony of British Holocaust survivors and liberators. This should begin with an urgent audit of existing testimony and an assessment of the steps needed to migrate recordings to future technology platforms. Where new recordings are needed, they should be filmed in the highest definition available, in the purest form and with the greatest possible versatility to be adaptable for continued use as technology evolves. The full range of options should be explored, including the use of advanced filming techniques to capture the experience of interacting with a survivor.

Pioneering work has already begun to make this possible. This includes the partnership between USC Shoah Foundation and the National Holocaust Centre near Newark and the pro bono work of BAFTA-winning British company Atlantic Productions who have been supporting the Commission in developing and testing the future-proofing of survivor testimony.

“Throughout my life, I have learnt more from them than any other group I have met, and they are the individuals I admire above all. What I admire is not just how they lived through and survived all they saw, but how, as a result of their indomitable faith, they rebuilt their lives, married, had children and grandchildren, and refused to let evil have the final word or the final victory.”

Former Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks

No less important, is action to make more accessible the huge amount of testimony within diaries and other records held in archives such as at The Wiener Library. These rich sources of information were, in many cases, provided by adult survivors and captured during or immediately after events, but are in need of translation and digitalisation. The Learning Centre should initiate a project to undertake this work, once the urgent work to capture testimony is complete.

All forms of testimony should be made more easily accessible, particularly through the Learning Centre’s online hub. In addition, the partnerships which the Commission has formed should be nurtured to improve access in this country for the tremendous resources of testimony held abroad at Yad Vashem and USC Shoah Foundation.



## 5. DELIVERY AND NEXT STEPS

The Commission's final recommendation is the immediate creation of a permanent independent body. This organisation would oversee the establishment of the new National Memorial and Learning Centre, run that Centre and administer the endowment fund. It would be supported by advisory panels of experts including Holocaust survivors and members of the Commission's Youth Forum, who were selected from more than 700 young people who submitted essays to the Commission as part of the Call for Evidence.

The first tasks for this permanent body should be to take forward the urgent programme to record survivor testimony, secure the money needed to deliver these recommendations and acquire a prominent location for the new National Memorial and Learning Centre.

The Commission proposes that the permanent body seek to raise money from business and private philanthropy and that the government should match this, pound for pound, up to an agreed limit.

The Commission is eager to see progress on this quickly and, over the past few months, has been advised and assisted a great deal by several individuals and institutions in exploring possible sites. In particular, the Commission would like to express its gratitude to the University of London, Transport for London, the London Legacy Development Corporation, along with a number of councils including Camden, Westminster and Southwark.

The Commission has identified three possible locations that should be considered as part of a consultation taken forwards by the permanent independent body. Each has distinct advantages and challenges and they are not the only possible sites, but they are offered here as tangible possibilities that can capture the essence of the vision set out in this report.

## Imperial War Museum

The Holocaust Exhibition at IWM London is very highly regarded, as was demonstrated throughout the evidence received. There is therefore an obvious advantage in locating the Learning Centre alongside IWM London in Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park near Lambeth. The site is within easy reach of Westminster and accessible via several routes by public transport. It offers existing high footfall with approximately 1.5 million visits to IWM in 2014.

IWM has proposed the building of a new wing to house a memorial and a learning centre and to link to newly expanded and upgraded Holocaust galleries in the main building. This would also benefit from being able to use the existing visitor facilities and essential infrastructure of the IWM building.

It is the view of the Commission that this is a viable option, provided a way can be found to meet the Commission's vision for a prominent and striking memorial.



*Photos courtesy of Imperial War Museum*

## Potters Field

Berkeley Group is developing a site on the riverfront between Tower Bridge and City Hall. One Tower Bridge consists of luxury flats with some commercial space, but it has within it a large space intended for cultural use, which could accommodate the components of the Learning Centre envisaged in this report.

Potters Field Park sits immediately in front of the development on the South Bank and could provide an iconic location for a world-renowned memorial. The site offers water frontage and existing high footfall, making it a very attractive location for an appropriate, memorial. Such a memorial would need to fit well with the surroundings and invite people to interact and engage with it, in the style of the New England Holocaust Memorial in Boston, USA, and so add to the appeal of the park, rather than detract from it.

The area attracts locals and tourists in huge numbers with views across to Tower Bridge and the Tower of London. A memorial here would also be seen from the river and its surroundings. It would draw people to it and into a learning centre beyond.

Potters Field Park is managed by a Trust and local residents would need to be fully consulted.





## Millbank

David and Simon Reuben have been inspirational supporters of the Commission's vision and have proposed a redevelopment of a large area of their Millbank complex.

The location offers great potential for a prominent riverfront memorial, a short walk along the river from the Houses of Parliament. The campus could include a hidden garden, reflective pond, wall of remembrance and a learning centre, incorporating the existing cinema, doubling as a lecture theatre.

The complex sits alongside Tate Britain which attracts 1.4 million visits a year. It also benefits from its own pier with river boat connections to Westminster. There may be the opportunity to work alongside Tate Britain to further develop the area to increase its appeal, helping to create a new cultural and educational quarter.



1. John Islip Street Entrance
2. Hidden Garden
3. Reflective pond
4. Wall of Remembrance
5. Interpretation Centre Entrance
6. Interpretation Centre (below ground)
7. Holocaust Memorial
8. Millbank Tower
9. Millbank Pier
10. Tate Britain

“When we heard about the idea of a Holocaust Memorial, and that such an important project had been framed and would be built in London, our initial thought was that, as a country which has welcomed those fortunate enough to have survived such an outrage, it is fitting that the capital of the UK would become home to such a tribute.

From the tyranny of the ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labour camps during the war years, to the Jewish people at the forefront of the war against the Nazis which resulted in victory for the Allied troops, we believe that it is vital that the record of the Holocaust impresses itself on today’s youth, not just in Britain but throughout the world. The victory of the Allied troops and the liberation of all from these death camps is something that should not be forgotten through the passing of time. We would be honoured to be able to provide a fitting home for the Memorial and look forward to pursuing this initial dialogue.”

David and Simon Reuben



*Commissioners meeting former US President Jimmy Carter*

### **Timescale for delivering the vision of this report**

The Commission had the privilege of meeting former US President Jimmy Carter and learning first-hand about his experiences with the US Commission which he established in the late 1970s and which led – after a long 14 years – to the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

Nearly four decades later and with more and more survivors passing away, Britain simply cannot afford this kind of delay in delivery. The Commission would like to see survivor testimony recording completed this year; the creation of the Memorial in 2016/17 and the Learning Centre within the next Parliament.

The Commission plans to meet annually until it is satisfied that its recommendations have been fully implemented.

Throughout its work the Commission has been grateful for the strong support of all three main political parties and the personal involvement of Michael Gove, Ed Balls and Simon Hughes in forming these recommendations.

The Commission hopes that each of the party leaders will now join in a clear and unequivocal cross-party commitment to take these recommendations forward, so that this work can begin immediately and the legacy of Britain's Holocaust survivors can be secured for generations to come.

“

First they came for the Socialists,  
and I did not speak out –  
*Because I was not a socialist.*

Then they came for the Trade  
Unionists, and I did not speak out –  
*Because I was not a Trade Unionist.*

Then they came for the Jews,  
and I did not speak out –  
*Because I was not a Jew.*

Then they came for me – and there  
was no one left to speak for me.

Pastor Martin Niemöller



# Appendix A

## Commissioners and Expert Group Members

### Members of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission

Mick Davis (Chair)

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Rt Hon Ed Balls MP

Rt Hon Simon Hughes MP

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Sir Peter Bazalgette

Helena Bonham Carter CBE

Charlotte Cohen

Dame Helen Hyde DBE

Natasha Kaplinsky

Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE

Leo Noé

### Expert Group on Education

Dame Helen Hyde DBE (Chair)

Professor David Cesarani OBE

The Lord (Daniel) Finkelstein, OBE

Henry Grunwald OBE QC

Maurice Ostro OBE

Dr Simon Sebag Montefiore

### Expert Group on Commemoration

Sir Peter Bazalgette (Chair)

Ben Helfgott MBE

Jack Kagan

Diane Lees CBE

Samir Shah OBE

Dr James Smith CBE

## Appendix B

# Acknowledgements

The vast majority of responses to the Call for Evidence were provided by individual members of the public. Their voices are represented in the issues and suggestions in the preceding pages. Below is a list of organisations which provided formal responses and individuals with public profiles. A great many schools offered evidence. Their contributions have been included, although they are too many to list here.

'45 Aid Society

'45 Aid Society Second Generation

A to Beyond

Access and Disabilities Working Group, Reading Borough Council

Achievement and Equality Team, Nottinghamshire County Council

Alliance For Cohesion and Racial Equality

Ambleside Oral History Group

Anne Frank Trust UK

Armenian National Committee of Greece

Arundel Churches

Ashfield and Mansfield Community Safety Partnership

Asociatia Tikvah

Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians

Asylum Education and Legal Fund

Audley Square Books

BBYO

Ben Uri Gallery

Best Foot Music

Beth Shalom Reform Synagogue

Breathe RE

British Institute of Human Rights

Broughton Park Jewish Christian Dialogue Group

Centre for Holocaust Education, UCL Institute of Education, University of London  
Charnwood Museum  
Christ the Worker Church  
Christian Council of Britain  
Christian Friends of Israel  
Churches Together in Cirencester  
Community Security Trust  
Council of Christians and Jews  
Cumbria County Council  
Defending History  
Derby City Council  
Derby Holocaust Memorial Day Working Group  
Dr Andy Pearce, Centre for Holocaust Education, UCL Institute of Education  
Dr James Jordan, The Parkes Institute for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations, University of Southampton  
Dr Kate Vigurs, University of Leeds  
Dr Yoram Schiffmann, University of Cambridge  
Ealing Synagogue  
Equality  
Europe Roma Network and Gypsy Council  
European Economic and Social Committee  
Facing History and Ourselves  
Faculty of Education and Theology, York St John University  
Faith Matters  
Friends, Families and Travellers  
Gathering the Voices, Glasgow Caledonian University  
Golden Leaf Counselling Services  
Habonim Dror  
Hamodia Newspaper  
Hastings & District Jewish Society  
Holocaust Educational Trust  
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust  
Holocaust Research Centre, Royal Holloway, University of London  
Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association  
Imperial War Museums  
Interfaith Panel



Interfaith Scotland

Into Film

Jewish Care Holocaust Survivors' Centre

Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain

Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade

Jewish Leadership Council

Jewish Military Museum

Jewish Museum London

Kahan Travel

Kingston Synagogue Ostrava Group

Kingston Synagogues' Holocaust Committee

Lake District Holocaust Project, Another Space Limited

Laniado UK

Llandudno Holocaust Memorial Day

London Jewish Cultural Centre

London Metropolitan Archives

Manchester City Council

Manchester Jewish Community Care

Manchester Jewish Museum

March of the Living UK

Material Hollywood

Merseyside Jewish Representative Council

Migration Museum Project

Muslim Holocaust Educators Trust and Muslim Friends of Yad Vashem

National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups

National Portrait Gallery

National Union of Teachers

New London Synagogue, Masorti Judaism

New Media Networks

Newcastle upon Tyne Holocaust Memorial Day Working Group

Northwood & Pinner Liberal Synagogue

Northwood Holocaust Memorial Day

Nottingham Friends of Austerlitz Group

Nottinghamshire County Council

Our Centre

Passmores Academy

Pears Foundation  
Plymouth & Devon Racial Equality Council  
Pop Beats Bullying  
Portsmouth and Southsea Hebrew Congregation  
Professor Aubrey Newman, University of Leicester  
Professor David Feldman, The Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism, Birkbeck, University of London  
Professor Rainer Schulze, University of Essex  
Professor Tom Lawson, Northumbria University  
Professor Tony Kushner, University of Southampton  
Professor Vernon Bogdanor CBE, King's College London  
Project Witness  
Reading Hebrew Congregation  
René Cassin  
Rothschild Foundation (Hanadiv) Europe  
RSY-Netzer  
Rushcliffe Borough Council Community Safety Partnership  
Scottish Council of Jewish Communities  
Second Generation Network  
Secular Jewish Group  
Sefton Holocaust Memorial Project  
Shpresa Programme  
Sikh Forum International  
Sir Andrew Burns, Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues  
South Wales Jewish Representative Council  
South West Dorset Multicultural Network  
St Albans Diocese  
St Mungos Museum of Religious Life and Art  
StandWithUs UK  
Stantonbury Campus  
Tarrant Churches Together  
The Alliance Party of Northern Ireland  
The Anglican Chaplaincy Trust, The University of Sheffield  
The Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women  
The Association of Jewish Refugees  
The Board of Deputies of British Jews

The British Library  
The Football Association  
The Green Party of England and Wales  
The Historical Association  
The Interlink Foundation  
The Jewish Chronicle  
The Jewish Community of Austria  
The Jewish Community of Belfast  
The Jewish Community of France  
The Jewish Community of Italy  
The Jewish Community of Pakistan and Kashmir  
The Jewish Community of Serbia  
The Jewish Community of Slovakia  
The Jewish Community of Sweden  
The Jewish Community of Switzerland  
The Jewish Community of the Czech Republic  
The Jewish Community of the Netherlands  
The Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and Region  
The Memorial Scrolls Trust  
The Museum of Liverpool  
The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester  
The National Holocaust Centre  
The Olive Trust  
The Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Hebrew Congregation  
The Salvation Army Ilford  
The Scottish Jewish Archives Centre  
The Society of Chief Librarians  
The Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies  
The Union of Jewish Students  
The United Synagogue  
The West Norfolk Jewish Community  
The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust & Genocide  
The Yizkor Project  
Traveller Solidarity Network  
UK Youth Parliament  
United Hebrew Congregation of Newcastle upon Tyne

United Jewish Israel Appeal  
United Reformed Church \_ North Western Synod  
University and College Union  
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK) – World Council of Hindus  
Voices of the Holocaust  
Waging Peace  
Waveney District Council  
West Glamorgan Archive Service  
Wimbledon and District Synagogue  
World Jewish Relief  
World Jewish Restitution Organization  
Yad Vashem – UK Foundation  
YadbYadUK  
Yom HaShoah UK  
York Minster  
Yvonne Arnaud Youth Theatre, Guildford