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Hitchcock, the Holocaust, and the Long Take

Memory of the Camps

In 1945, Alfred Hitchcock got involved in the production of a documentary film, which later would be called Memory of the Camps. Although Hitchcock's involvement in the project was rather minimal, his contribution interfered in an interesting way with some of the aesthetic preoccupations that particularly characterized his feature films of the 1940s. How are some of these interests, such as the fascination for morbid details, the use of fetish objects and a preference for long takes, connected to the issues of memory, trauma, and (historical) truth?

In 1945 Alfred Hitchcock got involved in the production of a documentary film about the Nazi concentration camps.[1] Although Hitchcock's involvement in the project was rather minimal, his contribution interfered in an interesting way with some of the aesthetic preoccupations that characterized his feature films at that time. This article investigates how some of these preoccupations, such as the fascination for fetish objects and a preference for long takes, are connected to the issues of (collective) memory, (cultural) trauma, and (historical) truth.

In the first place, the documentary in question, which would be called *Memory of the Camps* only much later, was the initiative of Sidney Bernstein, a close friend of Hitchcock's. Bernstein was, no doubt, a key figure in the history of British cinema (Moorehead). Cofounder of the British Film Society in 1924, he had founded the Granada chain of movie theaters in 1930. With his wide range of contacts in cultural circles and his first-hand knowledge of film exhibition and distribution on both sides of the Atlantic, Bernstein became a film advisor to the Ministry of Information during the war. A vehement anti-fascist, Bernstein also believed in the power of cinema to improve mankind – a humanist belief that was widely shared by his friends in the British documentary movement, which included filmmakers such as John Grierson, Alberto Cavalcanti, Basil Wright, and Humphrey Jennings amongst others.

This combination of humanism and love of the cinema also engendered *Memory of the Camps.* In early April 1945, American and British footage of the

[1] For the complex genesis of *Memory of the Camps*, see Sussex 1984 and Gladstone 2005. See also Losson 1995.

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liberated concentration camps had shocked officials, who decided to have the images publicly shown. The war against Nazi Germany was no longer only a conflict with an imperialist opponent ignoring international law. From now on, it could be made clear to everyone (and thus also to the German population) that the war was a struggle against a barbaric enemy, who trampled on human dignity as such. As Chief of the Film Section in the Psychological Warfare Division of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), Bernstein personally went to Belsen. Heavily impressed by this confrontation with the atrocities of the camps, Bernstein, who closely worked together with Sergei Nolbandov of the Ministry of Information, launched the idea to make a full-length documentary. This film, initially conceived as an Anglo-American co-production, would not only contain the footage shot by the first allied cameraman who had entered the camps but also new and specially-shot sequences. A film meant to be watched particularly by German civilians and prisoners of war, Bernstein's documentary had to take the edge of any attempt to minimalize or deny the atrocities of the camps.

Memories of an Unfinished Film

From its inception, the project faced numerous difficulties. In the final days of the war in Europe, cameramen had also other stories to cover, whereas the camps were being cleared for humanitarian and sanitary reasons as rapidly as possible – *Memory of the Camps* even deals with this issue and comprises footage of the burning of barracks at Belsen. In addition, the amount of material was considerably greater than anticipated. This advantage implied an important and – in retrospect – fatal disadvantage: much more time and means were required to edit and finish the film. While the post-production was delayed due to quite a few logistical problems, circumstances changed drastically. On the one hand, Bernstein's ambitious project was difficult to reconcile with the urgent need for a short atrocity film that could be screened at once. This is why the Americans withdrew from the joint venture headed by Bernstein. They made their own short concentration camp film entitled *Die Todesmühlen* (*Death Mills*), which was released in the American Zone of occupation in January 1946. On the other hand, while time had passed, interest for a film like *Memory of the Camps* diminished. As Bernstein's film got entangled in a long post-production process, allied officials noted that the inhabitants of Germany's devastated cities had gone under in a well of dull apathy. In the end, they decided to change their policy. Rather than confronting the German population with the miseries of the concentration camps, it was thought that the Germans needed new perspectives to encourage them to shed their apathy. This change of policy, which implied a drastic change of view of the therapeutic role of such horrifying film images,

finished off Bernstein's film project. When he left the Ministry of Information in September 1945, he left five of the six intended reels in the form of a fine-cut print, without titles, credits, or sound.

This unfinished film contained footage of Belsen, Dachau, Buchenwald, Ebensee, and Mauthausen, among others. A print (the negative of which is lost) was eventually shelved in the Imperial War Museum in London. There, it was rediscovered in the early 1980s and indicated with the description "F3080," the archival number attributed to the copy by the Ministry of Information. Eventually, the postponed premiere of this remarkable production took place in February 1984 when the film was shown at the Berlin film festival. A year later, the film was "finished" for a broadcast on American television. Apart from adding Russian material (of Auschwitz among others), this "final version" was based on two separate file documents, which gave indications for the editing on the one hand and for the voice-over (by Trevor Howard) on the other.[2]

Enter Hitchcock

When it was rediscovered in the 1980s, the film was, a bit rashly, presented as a missing Alfred Hitchcock movie. "The Horror Film That Hitchcock Couldn't Bear to Watch," *The Sunday Times* headlined (Lebrecht). Hitchcock was indeed involved in this project. Quite early on, Bernstein felt that a feature film director was needed to organize the sensitive content. After all, the filmmakers realized they were confronted with exceptional material. According to one of the editors, the continuity sheets were almost as upsetting as the film itself and the young persons in the labs were replaced by older personnel (Sussex 93). Several eminent directors were approached – Carol Reed and Billy Wilder among them. However, Hitchcock's name was one of the first mentioned (already in the beginning of May 1945) and he turned out the only top director available.

Bernstein, of course, had known Hitchcock since the 1920s, from the days of the Film Society. They became lifelong friends and at the outset of the war, right after his move to the States, Hitchcock had agreed with Bernstein to make war propaganda films for England. In Hollywood, Hitchcock had contributed to the Allied cause with the anti-Nazi feature films *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), *Saboteur* (1942), and *Lifeboat* (1944). When he got involved in Bernstein's atrocity film project, Hitchcock was already working on *Notorious* (1946), in which Nazis are hiding in South America. In addition, in August 1941, Hitchcock had met and helped Bernstein in New York and Hollywood when the latter was looking for support from the American film industry. Last but not

[2] This version of the film (ca. 55 minutes) was first broadcast in 1985 in the context of the PBS program *Frontline.* It is released on DVD by PBS Home Video.

least, from December 1943 until the beginning of March 1944, Hitchcock had stayed in London to direct two short films for the Ministry of Information: *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, two projects shot in French with exiled French actors that paid tribute to the French resistance (Leff and McGilligan).

For his atrocity film, Bernstein wanted someone who was able to flavour the controversial footage but also someone who could proceed with caution. Bernstein needed "the imaginative touch that somebody like Hitchcock could give" (Sussex 95). Hitchcock "came over to edit it and give it some kind of extra thing besides straight documentary" (Sussex 95). For the film project on the camps, Hitchcock arrived in London in mid-June 1945, at a moment when the Americans had already withdrawn their support of the project. In retrospect, his role within the project can best be specified as that of advisor of the film, certainly not a director. His task was to make the film as interesting and telling as possible, cinematically shaping the material.

For this purpose, Hitchcock worked together with two screenwriters, who both had first-hand knowledge of the camps. The first one was the Australian-born journalist Colin Wills, who had been in Belsen as a war correspondent for the *News Chronicle.* Wills prepared the first draft treatment of a screenplay that relied heavily on narration and also the first version of the commentary. The second screenwriter was Richard Crossman, who was valued for his knowledge of German propaganda. Crossman was Assistant Chief of the Psychological Warfare Division. In the 1950s and 1960s, he became a leading figure in the Labour Party. Also involved in the project were two editors – a compilation film involving so much footage owes a great deal to its editors. Stewart McAllister, a renowned editor in British cinema who worked with Humphrey Jennings and Norman McLaren, acted as supervising editor. In particular, he shaped the British Army Film Unit rolls, which form the first half of the film. The other editor involved was Peter Tanner, who worked mostly on the American material, which comprised the greater part of the second half.

Everyday Settings and Fetish Objects

Although *Memory of the Camps* cannot be considered a Hitchcockian flight of fancy, it can be interesting to see the film in the perspective of some of the characteristics of Hitchcock's style. After all, in his capacity of advisor, Hitchcock made some suggestions that, in one way or another, relate to the formal or thematic characteristics of his own feature films. According to Tanner, Hitchcock's contribution comprised "the imaginative way he was going to show it to the German people… He took a circle round each concentration camp as it were on a map, different villages, different places and the numbers of people – so they must have known about it… Otherwise you could show a concentration camp,

as you see them now, and it could be anywhere, miles away from humanity. He brought that into the film" (Sussex 95). In order to tie the footage of concentration camps in with the outside world, Hitchcock also recommended including images of German villagers being forced to visit one of the liberated camps. Hitchcock, who started making television in the 1950s with the argument that "it brought murder back into the home where it belongs," presents horror as something that is not miles away from humanity but part of it (Hitchcock, *After-Dinner Speech* 58). Given this perspective, the inclusion of pastoral imagery of the environments of Belsen at the beginning of the film, has nothing to do with the repression of traumatic events. On the contrary, Hitchcock, who situated horrific events in his feature films no longer in castles and dungeons but in everyday domestic settings (Jacobs), presents the Holocaust as something that is interwoven with seemingly innocent landscapes.

Apart from putting forward the idea to situate the atrocity in an everyday environment, Hitchcock also suggested the sequence in the final reel covering the possessions of the dead at Auschwitz, the harrowing montage of hair, wedding rings, spectacles, and toothbrushes (Gladstone 56). Similarly, the Buchenwald footage contains images of tattooed skins and shrunken heads. Evidently, these morbid sequences are in line with the grotesque and sadist universe of the so-called "master of suspense" but they acquire an uncanny meaning in the light of Hitchcock's fascination for fetish objects. Many of his feature films, after all, are characterized by the presence of objects charged with symbolic and emotional meaning. These objects are emphatically visualized through the use of close-ups or extreme close-ups and through their integration in his characteristic point-of-view editing. Hauntingly, similar objects turn up in his films throughout the 1940s and 1950s: jewelry in *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Under Capricorn*, *Rear Window*, and *Vertigo*; spectacles in *Strangers on a Train*; hair in *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest* and *Psycho*; a shrunken head in *Under Capricorn.* In each case, these objects are related to deceased persons and murder. We can assume that Hitchcock must have been fascinated by the gruesome details but also by the striking close-ups taken by army cameramen, who were specifically asked by Bernstein to photograph material which would show the connection between German industry and the concentration camps – for instance, name plates on incinerators and gas chambers. Often connected to death and murder in his feature films, Hitchcock's painstaking attention to details and objects turns into a chilling *memento mori* in the context of this atrocity film. The sequence of images of piles of rings, spectacles and toothbrushes makes the unconceivable scale of the Final Solution visible. Each object, after all, is connected to a particular human being. Each personal object embodies the memory of one of the victims. Everyday objects may have lost "the memory of their own process" in times of mass production and commodification, they nevertheless can contain memories like souvenirs or photographs (Terdiman 3–32). Precisely because

they are not exceptional valuables but everyday and banal objects, they evoke both the industrial organization of the Final Solution and their interconnection with peoples' lives.

Long Take

Hitchcock also realized, however, that his typical film style and his signature of suspense should be modified in view of the particular traumatic topic. Hitchcock feared that many would disbelieve the material and that the Allies would be accused of faking the film. To minimize the risk of such reactions, he asked the two editors to avoid any tricky editing – a remarkable request since sophisticated montage turned films such as *Sabotage* (1936) and *Psycho* (1960) into true masterpieces of spatial manipulation. Instead, Hitchcock asked to use primarily long shots and panning shots with no cuts.

Hitchcock developed the use of mobile long takes in his films of the mid- and late 1940s. As most Hollywood productions from that era, Hitchcock's films of the late 1940s have a significantly higher average shot length than his earlier films.[3] *Notorious* (1946) and *The Paradine Case* (1947), the first feature films directed by Hitchcock after his participation in the production of *Memory of the Camps*, are perfect examples of this tendency. They are not only characterized by a significantly higher average shot length, they also comprise some impressive long takes. However, this aesthetic culminates in the two subsequent films: *Rope* (1948) and *Under Capricorn* (1949) that comprise a remarkably low number of shots – *Rope* famously even creates the illusion to consist entirely of a single uninterrupted take. Strikingly, *Rope* and *Under Capricorn* were both produced by Transatlantic, the Anglo-American studio that Hitchcock had founded with no less a person than Sidney Bernstein. Masterpieces of the aesthetics of the long take, Hitchcock's films of the late 1940s are also characterized by virtuoso camera movements. To obtain this, Hitchcock experimented with new specially developed camera equipment such as a crab dolly in *The Paradine Case*, and an ingenious set consisting of mobile walls in his supposedly single-take film *Rope.* Strikingly, in many of his feature films of the 1940s, Hitchcock connected the technology and aesthetics of the long take with memory. Films such as *Notorious*, *The Paradine Case*, *Rope* and *Under Capricorn* have characters with a traumatic past. This tallies with a general trend in American cinema during the 1940s. The preference for long takes in the 1940s, after all, is closely connected with the development of new kinds of cinematic subjectivity supported by the use of specific cinematic devices such as the flash-back and the voice-over. Scanning

[3] The average shot length (ASL) of a Hollywood film of the late 1930s is 8.5 seconds. This increases to 9.5 seconds in the years 1940–1945 and to 10.5 seconds in the period 1946–1950; see Salt 1992: 231.

spaces and objects, the mobile long take in film noir and 1940s melodramas often acquires a kind of mesmerizing effect whereby characters with wandering thoughts are presented in a state of reverie.

For *Memory of the Camps*, however, Hitchcock clearly had another kind of long take in mind. Although he explicitly requested "long tracking shots, which cannot be tampered with", *Memory of the Camps* contains almost none of the breathtakingly fluid long takes characteristic of his feature films of the day (McGilligan 373). Of course, after his arrival in London, Hitchcock was able to give advice only to editors and not to cameramen. Nonetheless, the film does contain a few remarkable long takes: the Belsen footage comprises some impressive panning shots of corpses and the Dachau sequence opens with a striking forward tracking shot. Tanner also recalled Hitchcock selecting a long take of priests from various denominations visiting one of the camps. "They had a Catholic priest. They had a Jewish rabbi. They had a German Lutheran and they had a protestant clergyman from England. And it was all shot in one shot so that you saw them coming along, going through the camp, and you saw from their point of view all that was going on. And it never cut. It was all in one shot. And this I know was one of Hitchcock's ideas and it was very effective. There was no way for somebody seeing it that it could have been faked." (Sussex 96)

It is worthwhile to remember that Hitchcock, who had assimilated Griffith's classical editing style early on and who was influenced by Soviet montage theories, was not really fond of long takes in his British period. In a 1937 essay, he wrote that, "if I have to shoot a long scene continuously, I always feel I am losing grip on it, from a cinematic point of view. The camera, I feel, is simply standing there, *hoping* to catch something with a visual point to it" (Hitchcock, "Direction" 255). Probably, this is exactly what he intended for *Memory of the Camps:* not the virtuoso camera movements of his 1940s feature films but explicitly "losing the grip" on the image. As an advisor to the atrocity film, Hitchcock had certainly not in mind the long-take aesthetic he was developing at the time – an aesthetic which quite differs from the contemporaneous use of the long take by Orson Welles, William Wyler or Max Ophuls and certainly from that by Jean Renoir or Roberto Rossellini, who strongly influenced André Bazin's heavily war-marked writings in the 1940s.

In the context of the atrocity film, Hitchcock's insistence on using long takes is perhaps his closest embracement of a Bazinian realism in the light of his dealing with historical documents and cultural trauma. In this case, the long take indicates a director or filmmaker, who "loses his grip" on the images, which should speak for themselves. In spite of the use of maps or the intercutting of images of corpses with close-ups of survivors' faces in agony, anger, or distress, the authenticity of the atrocity film is based on what Bazin (*What Is Cinema?* 9–16) called "the ontology of the photographic image" and only to a smaller extent on the structural relations between images (and hence on montage). Hitchcock's

insistence on the use of the long take perfectly agrees with Bazin's embrace of the long take and his preference of *mise-en-scène* and depth-of-field shooting over montage. For Bazin (*What Is Cinema?* 23–40), long takes and deep-focus cinematography differed in two ways from montage: they respect the integrity of cinematic space (instead of fragmenting it) and they include a valuable ambiguity and uncertainty of meaning (instead of focusing the viewer's attention to specific details). Discussing Bazin's film theory, Dudley Andrew wrote: "montage is always in some sense a *telling* of events, while depth-of-field shooting remains at the level of *recording*" (163). Advocating a kind of cinema that is discursively indeterminate and that encourages the spectator to gaze long and hard at the diegetic world before him or her, Bazin argued that the emergence of the long take and deep-focus cinematography was caused by a renewed demand for freedom in response to the traumatic experiences of war, totalitarianism and mass brutality.

Watching the footage of the liberated camps, Hitchcock, too, advocated a kind of cinema that aims at *recording* instead of *telling*. In the face of the Nazi horror, cinema seems to be thrown back on itself. On the one hand, for Bazin and the Italian neo-realists, the terrors of the war had exposed the artificiality of commercial cinema as a perverse kind of escapism. On the other hand, it is as if for Hitchcock only a kind of cinematic essentialism or primitivism could deal with the atrocities. To further prevent people from thinking that the film was faked, the cinematic image was presented as a kind of revelation – an idea crucial to Bazin, who perceived an almost religious mystery in the photographic image and the *plan-séquence* that preserves the duration of reality. As several commentators have noted, Bazin's realism had little to do with mimesis but it rather implied an existential bond between fact and image or world and film. (Andrew 170–73; Aitken 179–92) According to Bazin, cinema was the art form that was capable of revealing the spiritual dimension of reality.

The Notion of Death

One can assume that this was also the case for Hitchcock's *Memory of the Camps*. Within the context of the atrocity film, Hitchcock's rapprochement with a Bazinian aesthetic even acquires a special dimension because in Bazin's film theory the notion of death is very important. For Bazin, who was influenced by a highly peculiar mix of phenomenology, existentialism, and Catholicism, the human condition was first and foremost marked by mortality and transience. The attitude of man *vis-à-vis* the reality exposed by cinema is transitory and ephemeral. As a result, the experience of duration plays an important role in the Bazinian aesthetic of the long take, in which reality seems to expose itself rather than being subjected to the interpretation of the filmmaker, annex spectator. The

spectator is encouraged to look long and hard at the world in which time passes. Death in film, consequently, was an obscenity for Bazin because it reversed the irreversible (Bazin, "Mort tous les après-midi"; Mulvey 63–64).

Bazin's assignment of a moral superiority to the long take clearly reverberates in Hitchcock's directions for the montage of *Memory of the Camps.* For Hitchcock, like Bazin a Catholic, the images of the dead are a revelation that incites the filmmaker to work discretely. Whereas Hitchcock, in many of his feature films, excelled in the representation of murder by playing on the sadist pleasure of the spectator by means of an ingenious and manipulative montage (*Sabotage*, *Saboteur*, *Psycho*, *Torn Curtain*), steps back quietly in *Memory of the Camps.* In this perspective, Bernstein's film project is a kind of anti-thesis of the usual Hitchcock film of those days, which, according to critics such as Raymond Bellour and William Rothman, emphatically bears the marks of its maker (by the use of cameos or the presence of the camera, which represents the auteur).

However, Hitchcock's discretion should be put into perspective. In his attempt to combine the long take with a Bazinian realism, Hitchcock holds on to a moving camera, which directs and guides the spectator's attention. The most remarkable long takes in *Memory of the Camps* are panning shots or forward tracking shots and certainly not examples of the fixed and extended long take propagated by Bazin or later extremely used by filmmakers such as Andy Warhol or Chantal Akerman. *Memory of the Camps* is certainly not an example of an observational cinema that pays much attention to seemingly irrelevant details. Although the director takes a discrete stance, he never entirely "loses his grip" on the filmed material. In addition, the moving camera does not follow a moving action – the kind of camera movement appreciated by Bazin because it helps to construct a spatio-temporal continuum. On the contrary, in the most remarkable tracking and panning shots of the film, the camera moves along several subjects and thus plays an important part in the selection of information and in the construction of a narrative through successive series of images – a feature that culminates in the searching and roving camera in the opening sequence of *Rear Window* (1954).

Fact, Memory, Document

The demand for truth and the fear of being accused of fraud, expressed by the filmmakers in 1945, acquired new meanings in the light of later discussions on the visualization of the Nazi crimes, which themselves were not (or hardly) recorded on film. On the one hand, for filmmakers such as Claude Lanzmann, who refused to use archival footage in *Shoah* (1985), the Holocaust cannot be represented and is a kind of negative sublime – as if the unfilmed genocide answered to the Second Commandment that prohibits the making of idols (Hirsch 70–84; Cantor 25). On the other hand, the Bazinian idea of the

cinematic image as a vehicle of redemption was resumed in the dialectical montage practices of the later Jean-Luc Godard, whose *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1998) precisely departs from cinema's misencounter with the Holocaust (Hori; Saxton; Scemama). Dealing both with the history of film and with film as a privileged witness of twentieth-century history in general, Godard's magisterial video piece demonstrates that the twentieth century cannot be conceived without the medium of film. However, Godard's flux of images also touches upon the blind spot of the Holocaust in his double history – the liberation of the camps has been the subject of newsreels and films but footage of the horrific events themselves has not been found in spite of the Nazi's bureaucratic mania for recording every last detail.

Dealing with the Holocaust several decades later, both Lanzmann and Godard present us with the idea of visualizing the memory of the atrocities. In this perspective, Hitchcock's suggestions to the editors of Bernstein's film have acquired other meanings as well. Like his fetish objects, Hitchock's long takes and mobile camerawork are often linked with memory. Many of Hitchcock's 1940s films – *Rebecca*, *Spellbound*, *Notorious*, *The Paradine Case*, *Under Capricorn* – that are characterized by the use of fluid long takes, feature characters haunted by memories of traumatic experiences in their past. Such an evocation of traumatic memories by means of long takes and a mobile camera will later play an important role in the development of European modernist cinema in general and in the work of Alain Resnais in particular. In *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), Resnais employs these features to meditate on the memory of other terrors of the Second World War, such as collaboration and the atomic bomb. A few years earlier, in *Nuit et brouillard* (1955), his milestone documentary on the camps, Resnais also employed the mesmerizing effect of the long take. As Joshua Hirsh (56) has noted in his book on the role of film in the representation of the Holocaust, moving at a slow and constant speed, Resnais's smooth, eye-level tracking shots evoke the point of view of the anguished individual rather than the military, forensic, or historiographical gaze. By combining a haunted space with a moving camera and identification techniques such as the point of view shot, Resnais's documentary brings up Hitchcockian sensibilities.

In 1945, however, the atrocities were facts, not memories. Bernstein's film was only much later called *"Memory" of the Camps.* Rather than a modernist reflection on a historical trauma, its form answers to the conventions of the "newsreel-type documentary," which, according to Hirsch (32–33), was the dominant model in the first decade after the war. In the newsreel type, "footage of the liberated camps is edited into a synchronically structured visual representation, accompanied by highly didactic voice-over commentary." Hirsch also notices that, to a large extent, newsreel type documentaries are examples of what Bill Nichols has called the *expository* mode of documentary, which is characterized by "mostly nonsynchronized sound, voice-of-God style commentary

directly addressing the audience, rhetorical editing (continuity maintained primarily by rhetorical rather than spatial relations)" and an attitude of self-confidence in the objective potentials of the medium (34–38). In light of this, the film even literally contains newsreel fragments with direct sound, such as a *British Movietone News* excerpt with a statement by camp doctor Fritz Klein or the to-camera statements by a British soldier and a chaplain. These fragments are perfect examples of the use of testament in the early documentation of the Holocaust, which Barbie Zelizer discusses in her book *Remembering to Forget.* It was thought that having ordinary soldiers or officials in the shot of the camp – *Memory of the Camps* also contains footage of British Members of Parliament visiting Buchenwald – would function as a form of personal and official underwriting. Such images of reliable witnesses were presented as a testament to the authenticity of the evidence that would help convince the general public of the truth of the camps.

At the same time, Bernstein's ambitions to make a feature-length documentary give the film characteristics of another formal type (in contrast with the "newsreel type") of Holocaust documentary: the compilation film, which mostly appeared in conjunction with the war crimes trials (Hirsch 36). Although *Memory of the Camps* presents its material in synchronically rather than diachronically structured narratives, it comprises an attempt at a historical explanation by referring to the rise of Nazism in its opening sequence. In addition, Bernstein's initiative to involve Hitchcock in the project demonstrates the ambition to surpass the dimension of the newsreel-type film by combining factual footage with narrative and with the sensual and emotional power of cinema. This becomes clear already in the beginning of the film when images of an idyllic countryside create, in light of the horror to come, a kind of vintage Hitchcockian suspense. Although Hitchcock's share in the project should not be overestimated and put in the right perspective, *Memory of the Camps* throws an interesting light on the ways in which Hitchcock characteristics – long takes, mobile camera, close-ups of morbid details – operate in an unusual context.

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