Re-Inventing German Collective Memory: The Debate over the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe

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Re-Inventing German Collective Memory:
The Debate over the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe

An Advanced Independent Research Project

By

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Since I began work on what would become my thesis more than two years ago, studying German memory of the Holocaust has become much more than an academic pursuit. Engaging with this topic has developed into a personal passion, the apex of which is in the pages that follow. Whether this document is only an intermediate point in a longer career of historical study or the capstone achievement of my academic years, working on this project has been an incredibly meaningful experience for me academically and personally. Without the help of many incredible people, however, you would probably be about to read a disaster.

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*Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please . . . The traditions of all dead generations burden the minds of the living like a nightmare.*

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*
Arriving in Berlin in the middle of the 2006 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, I noticed nothing out of the ordinary for a population hosting an international tournament in which their nation participated. German flags flew from cars, buildings, flagpoles and even people; the tri-colors -- Rot, Schwarz, Gold (red, black, gold) – adorned bracelets, t-shirts, and every trinket imaginable. Ami dst all the revelry and celebration, German flags flew amongst those of every other soccer-loving country in the world. To me as an American nothing seemed out of the ordinary; what could be more natural than to show pride for one’s national team in a world championship? Yet, it took only a short conversation with any German to realize that the patriotism so openly expressed by the German population was something out of the ordinary. Just a short time prior to this, for reasons I will discuss later, most Germans considered flag-waving and national pride to be indicative of the radical right. The flag-waving and patriotism I experienced in World Cup Germany diverged radically from the attitudes of the nation in the decades prior because before that time, Germany had not yet finished struggling with or reached a resolution of its Nazi past. People could not begin to feel pride in the history or identity of their Volk, of Germany, until their nation had come to terms with the National Socialist past in some significant way.

Since World War II, Germans have often seemed to be trapped by their collective memory. Deeply involved with their traumatic Nazi past, they have sometimes dwelled on it to the point of obsession, one example of which has been an intense debate over how to memorialize the Holocaust. Since the end of World War II, Vergangenheitsbewältigung, coming to terms with their National Socialist history, has
stimulated numerous debates over memory that have greatly affected German national identity. This thesis explores the subject of German national identity through the framework of conflicts in the 1990s about the memory of the Holocaust, focusing on the debate over building a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin. I propose to explore two questions. First, what were the fundamental issues under debate and the arguments pertaining to each issue? Second, how have these memory issues affected German self-perception and thus national identity?

In order to begin to answer these questions, it is necessary to clarify what the national Holocaust memorial actually is. Then, the debate over its construction must be set in the historical context of German debate and discussion of the Holocaust and the memory of the Third Reich. Central to this debate was the question of whether the Nazi period was part of the larger trend of German history or if it was an aberration from it, a question that a number of prominent historians discussed during what came to be called the Historikerstreit (Historian’s Debate) of the 1980s. An examination of the Historikerstreit will reveal the particular relevance and importance of the issues it raised, as they would later give life to the debate over the national Holocaust memorial.

Das Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas

The Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas (DEJE), literally, the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, was unveiled in May, 2005, and it is by far the most unique memorial Berlin has to offer. This memorial consists of three thousand Stele (concrete columns), identical in width and depth, but ranging in height from almost flat on the ground to nine feet high. The ground, which rises and falls as the viewer walks, further exaggerates this height differential. As the columns are completely blank, the
Denkmal (memorial) itself is an aesthetic and symbolic experience, severed from a rational, fact-based exploration of the Holocaust. To walk through the memorial is to enter a world of contemplation, shadows, and isolation.

Yet at any moment, life can interrupt reflection. Children run and play amongst the great columns; municipal employees and business people alike walk through the columns to reach the other side, talking on their cell phones; adolescents stand atop the columns shouting to each other; some sit on the smaller columns eating an ice cream cone or drinking coffee on their lunch break. Something seems to have gone awry. Unlike other memorials in Berlin, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is not enclosed or set to the side; it is located completely unrestricted right in the heart of Berlin. Looking over the tops of the columns one can see the Reichstag and Brandenburg Tor, the Tiergarten, and the buildings of Potsdamer Platz. This memorial is completely exposed, open to everyone regardless of how he/she makes use of the memorial.¹

The memorial is enhanced by its second part, a Dokumentations Zentrum (Documentation Center), that is built into the ground underneath the memorial, the entrance and exits to which are among the Stele. After a brief history of the Jews in Germany and Europe, there are several rooms full of additional information. They contain stories of deportation, names of victims, computer consuls full of information pertaining to particular concentration camps and more consuls that provide information about Holocaust memorials throughout the world. On this level, the goal is clearly to give a visitor the information necessary to know about and understand the history and complexities of the Holocaust.

¹ Granted, some restrictions. There are rules listed on the ground as you walk into the memorial, and it is under surveillance.
There is also, however, a highly aesthetic element to this Documentation Center, akin to that found in the Washington D.C. Holocaust museum. Most of the dimly lit rooms contribute to a thoughtful, meditative mood, while exhibits detail personal stories, full of quotes, pictures and sound. The most striking room is empty; in it visitors listen to a speaker who reads the names of Jews who fell victim to the Nazis during the Holocaust.

**The Historical Context**

The overall effect of both parts of this memorial is intense. Visitors leave the memorial feeling extremely emotional, deeply contemplative, motivated to action, or in some cases anger about the memorial’s inadequacies and misrepresentations. The debate over the construction of the Holocaust memorial that began in 1989 and technically ended with its opening in 2005 reflected the intensity and variety of reactions people had to it. In order to fully understand this debate and why it took the form that it did, it is essential first to understand the historical context of public discussion over memory in Germany, of which the debate over the Holocaust memorial inevitably became a part. This conversation changed as each generation of Germans approached the Holocaust from a different viewpoint. The Cold War further complicated the development of German memory as the division of the country into East and West created two different collective memories.

Immediately after World War II, the occupying powers of West Germany – Britain, France and the United States – pursued a course of de-Nazification. De-Nazification was an attempt to eliminate the Nazi elements from German society, prosecute former Nazis, and educate German citizens about the crimes their nation had committed. In other words, it was the allied attempt to force Germans to think about

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2 This is arguable because the issues particularly relating to the memorial continue to be debated today.
events like the Holocaust and deal with them in the direct aftermath of the war. The Germans were not ready for this, however, and the policy ended up producing a state of collective amnesia – an all but complete silence on the subject – among the German people. The primary reason for this was the continued popularity of Hitler and Nazi beliefs among Germans at the time. Even after the Nuremberg Trials of October 1946, as many as 37% of Germans in the American zone agreed that exterminating non-Aryans was a necessity for German security. As late as 1952, 25% of West Germans still had a “good opinion” of Hitler.³ With this continued presence of Hitler and Nazi-ideology among the German people post-war, it was unlikely that any efforts made by the Allies to have Germans acknowledge their crimes were going to succeed.

Knowing this, West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer called for the Allies to halt the de-Nazification process and instead encourage silence on the subject. His main reason for this was his fear that forcing Germans to deal with the Nazi past at this time, as historian Tony Judt said, “was more likely to provoke a nationalist backlash than induce contrition.”⁴ As the Cold War became increasingly ominous and imminent, the Allies largely gave up their all-encompassing efforts at de-Nazification. Instead, they focused on efforts like the claims conference held by West Germany in 1951. This conference gathered together Jewish organizations, which worked together with the government to pay out DM 10 billion in reparations to individual Holocaust victims.⁵ In general, however, a self-induced amnesia with regard to the Holocaust and the Third Reich fell over West Germany.

⁴ Judt, *Postwar*, 57.  
East Germany, the *Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR)*, too, was suffering a form of amnesia with regard to the Nazi crimes, although for a different set of equally understandable reasons. The most fundamental issue here was the change from Fascism to Communism. The *DDR* viewed Nazism as a system rooted in capitalism that had misdirected the working class who were merely manipulated enactors of the Nazi policies.\(^6\) In the immediate post-war period, the primary goal of the Soviets was to completely eradicate Nazism from everyday life in order to strengthen the Communist hold. Because Nazism simply meant Fascism to the Soviets, the Soviets tended to overlook the characteristic of Nazism that made it distinctive: virulent racism. As a result, de-nazification in the East did not focus on the punishment of those who had committed genocide. Rather, it meant ridding East Germany of its capitalist and business elements so that the Communists could achieve a “socio-economic transformation.”\(^7\) As in the West, apart from those affiliated with capitalist enterprises, former Nazi party affiliation was generally ignored.\(^8\)

That the racist elements of Fascism were not generally considered by Communists was not the only reason for silence about the Holocaust, however. The Stalinization of East Germany eventually led to the Communist persecution of the Jews in the early 1950s, causing Jews to flee to West Germany in great numbers. Thus, it was not necessarily prudent to exhibit any sympathy for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The Holocaust was not left out of East German historical writing altogether, though, because it served an important role in the promotion of Communism through the negation of

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\(^7\) Judt, *Postwar*, 58-59.

\(^8\) Judt, *Postwar*, 60.
Fascism. Writing about the Nazi crimes usually made *Konzentrationslagers* (*KZs*) places in which Communist sorrows were to be mourned and Communist bravery against the Fascists was to be praised. Persecution of other victim groups was generally not mentioned.⁹ Due to the unique constraints placed on memory as a result of the Communist system, there was no real growth in terms of dealing with the Nazi past in East Germany as we will see shortly there was in West Germany.

In West Germany, despite the willful ignorance of the past, the Holocaust and the memory of the Third Reich refused to remain dormant. The first instance of this was the trial of former SS member Adolf Eichmann in April 1961. The trial, Eichmann’s death sentence and the subsequent debate over the trial began to raise the questions of German accountability and the capacity of humans to commit crimes such as the Holocaust.¹⁰ Another dimension of the 1960s was the fact that a new generation of Germans was growing up, one that was not directly connected to the Nazi past and that confronted the status quo regarding Holocaust memory. As this new student generation came of age, they were no longer willing to let questions about this part of their national past go unanswered.¹¹ They pressed their parents and grandparents for answers, reasons and explanations: How could you have done this? What were you thinking? How could a nation that produced some of the Enlightenment’s greatest philosophers have produced this evil? Some of the older generation still could not face their children out of fear; as

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one man who was a teenager at the time explained, “my Grandfather feared that I would put shame on him and this is the main reason why people did not talk about such things.”\textsuperscript{12} A docent at the German Historical Museum observed that the conversations surrounding this topic during the 1960’s resulted, “through many families” in there being “a line drawn of accusation, the younger generations against the older.”\textsuperscript{13}

Among the historians, too, and not just German society at large, there was a first wave of discussion challenging the traditional view of and silence about the Third Reich. Fritz Fischer argued controversially that Germany’s history between imperial times and the Third Reich had been continual and that therefore Nazi rule had not been an aberration from history.\textsuperscript{14} He did not believe that imperialism ended with the fall of the monarchy in 1914; rather that the “mental attitudes and aspirations which were active in German policy during the First World War . . . remained operative later.”\textsuperscript{15} This argument stood in stark contrast to the traditional viewpoint of German historians that portrayed Germany as guilt free and “saw the Third Reich as an aberration from the sound traditions of German history.”\textsuperscript{16} Fischer’s argument brought forth a great deal of historical literature in response from more conservative historians who saw Fischer’s arguments as defaming German tradition. While this debate was intense throughout the 1960s and 1970s, by the 1980s, the traditional perspective had been discarded and historians had generally accepted the view that German history had a continual path that led to the Third Reich.\textsuperscript{17}

\textsuperscript{12} Dr. Serge Embacher, administrative coordinator for \textit{Dr. Michael Buersch (MdB)} at the German Parliament, interview by author, 4 July 2006, Berlin.

\textsuperscript{13} Rainer Karrais, docent at the \textit{Deutsches Historisches Museum}, Interview by author, 29 June 2006, Berlin.


\textsuperscript{16} Evans, \textit{Hitler’s Shadows}, 113.

\textsuperscript{17} Ian Kershaw, \textit{The Nazi Dictatorship} (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), 188.
Der Historikerstreit

The events of the 1960s and the 1978 Holocaust television miniseries that opened German eyes to the Nazi crimes opened the door for a more dramatic debate over the role of the Nazi period and the Holocaust in German history. Genocide and the mass murder of peoples increasingly became a discussion topic as the Nazis and the German Volk became increasingly seen as one and the same.\(^{18}\) As a product of this view that emphasized the active role of the German people in the Holocaust, memory and discussion of the Holocaust became increasingly dark and depressing; as Dr. Serge Embacher said, “to go to a Holocaust memorial was like going to a funeral, this makes a contrast to the life of people.”\(^{19}\) In 1986, three Conservative historians published articles that sought to revise this view of history that connected Nazism to the entire German past, indirectly saying that it was time to put the Nazi past in perspective. The reaction to this call and the subsequent debate that lasted through the rest of the 1980s became known as the Historikerstreit. It was out of this debate that calls for the building of a national Holocaust memorial came, and the debate that surrounded the memorial emerged directly from the issues raised during the Historikerstreit.

The writing of three conservative historians, Andreas Hillgruber, Ernst Nolte, and Michael Stürmer, prompted the Historikerstreit. Significantly, two of the three pieces of writing that began this debate were published in the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, which sided with the conservative historians. Hillgruber’s Two Kinds of Downfall called for an understanding of both the genocide of the Jews and the atrocities

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\(^{18}\) Fulbrook, *Identity After the Holocaust*, 120, 122-3.

\(^{19}\) Interview by author with Dr. Serge Embacher.
committed against the Germans expelled from Eastern Europe.\(^{20}\) As Hillgruber stated in his forward, “both catastrophes belong together,” thus, emphasizing his argument that the Holocaust had to be placed in the context of other historical events occurring at the time.\(^{21}\) Hillgruber also made the argument that one should sympathize with the Wehrmacht’s difficult position on the Eastern Front as surrendering sooner to the Soviet Army would have meant almost certain retribution against not just the Wehrmacht, but also the civilian population, even though it might have resulted in the earlier liberation of KZs.\(^{22}\)

Nolte’s article, “The Past that will not Pass Away,” like Hillgruber’s essays, argued that it was time for historians to put the Holocaust into the wider perspective of German history. While he believed the Holocaust was a unique event, Nolte said it could not be isolated from a larger historical context suggesting that the KZs, for example, were merely imitations of Soviet Gulags; in Nolte’s words, “was not the ‘Archipelago GULag’ the original ‘Auschwitz?’”\(^{23}\) By constantly allowing the Nazi past to resurface, Nolte argued that Germans were preventing themselves from a positive identity with their own culture and nation, but by putting that past in historical context, the Germans could begin to leave it in the past.\(^{24}\) Stürmer’s “Land without History” argued that the history of Germany was shaped by a geopolitical struggle because of its location in the middle of the European continent.\(^{25}\) He went beyond this to say, like Nolte, that it was time to

\(^{20}\) Evans, *Hitler’s Shadows*, 49.
\(^{22}\) Evans, *Hitler’s Shadows*, 49.
\(^{24}\) Evans, *Hitler’s Shadows*, 20.
change the fact that Germans could not positively identify with their history or nationality; it was time for a redefinition of German national identity.\textsuperscript{26}

Liberal historians like Jürgen Habermas, Martin Broszat and, significantly, Eberhard Jäckel reacted strongly against these revisionist conservative historians. The liberal historians saw the conservative perspective as apologetic. In other words, the conservatives were trying to defend the crimes of the Third Reich by saying the geography and need for tactical defense were the underlying reasons for the actions of the Nazis. Additionally, the liberal historians said that the type of comparability that Nolte suggested would lead to a normalization of the crimes, making them seem not quite so atrocious when compared to the other crimes of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The liberal historians feared that normalization would lead to historicization, or a taking of history that was still alive and debated and putting it forever in the past. They suggested that historicization would lead to an attempt to portray the history of the Holocaust from a single, “objective” perspective that ignored the experiences of so many, “devaluing the role of another perspective, the victims’ memories, as ‘mythical’ and not historical.”\textsuperscript{27} The path of normalization would lead to a time when Germans could simply forget the Holocaust like any other “historical” event. To many, this was a terrifying prospect.\textsuperscript{28}

Ultimately, the \textit{Historikerstreit} opened several important issues for the overall issue of Germany’s coming to terms with the Nazi past, but also for the debate over the national Holocaust memorial. The first issue concerned how much shame and guilt contemporary Germans should feel for the Nationalist Socialist crimes. Revisionist

\textsuperscript{26} Evans, \textit{Hitler’s Shadows}, 21.
\textsuperscript{27} Fulbrook, \textit{Identity After the Holocaust}, 128.
\textsuperscript{28} Peter Baldwin, \textit{Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the historians’ debate}, ed. Peter Baldwin (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1990), 6.
conservatives suggested that Germany was obsessed with guilt and that it was time to move beyond that. The social liberals believed that shame must always be a part of the German identity process, that it was something that could not simply be gotten rid of. Stemming from this issue was that of forgetting, whether the Germans should be able to confine the Holocaust to historical memory or keep it alive in contemporary debate and thought. The third issue was that of the singularity of the Holocaust. Here the conservatives sought to make the Holocaust comparable to the crimes of other nations and regimes, while the liberals maintained that no other regime in history had sought the complete extermination of an entire people, not just in their territory, but throughout the world. A fourth issue concerned Germans as victims and the extent to which contemporary Germans could empathize with the decisions and policies of the German army. Finally, the Historikerstreit also raised the issue of redefining Germany and the need for Germany to develop a new national identity in which they could take pride.

Der Denkmalstreit

To a large degree, historians consider the Historikerstreit to have had no concrete results and to be concerned with “abstract concepts without stimulating historical research or the production of public history.” 29 However, as a direct consequence of this Historikerstreit and liberal fears that normalization of the Holocaust could occur in Germany, the idea for a permanent, national Holocaust memorial was born. In 1988, television personality Lea Rosh and historian Eberhard Jäckel created the citizen’s initiative Perspektive Berlin to generate support for a central Holocaust memorial, specifically to the murdered Jews, on the former Gestapo-Gelände (Gestapo territory) in

Berlin. Since 1987, this property had held a temporary documentation center about the Third Reich called the Topography of Terror. *Perspektive Berlin*’s proposal for a permanent memorial received support from notable public figures such as historian Joachim Braun, CEO of Daimler-Benz Edzard Reuter, former Bundeskanzler Willy Brandt and author Christa Wolf, among others.

In October 1989, the local finding commission in charge of deciding what should be done with the Gestapo-Gelände denied *Perspektive Berlin*’s proposal for a permanent Holocaust memorial to the Jewish victims at this location. Instead, they accepted the proposal from the association *Aktives Museum Faschismus und Widerstand* to build a permanent documentation center on the property, similar to the temporary one already in existence. Later that year, *Perspektive Berlin* was rolled into a new association called *Förderkreis Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* (Society for the Promotion of the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, *FEDJE*). This organization had the same leadership as *Perspektive Berlin* and its goal was to find a new location for a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. The website of the *FEDJE* said “the future needs memory,” and a quote from supporter Willy Brandt followed that expressed their purpose: our future “will be offered an immense expression of the memory of the murdered Jews of Europe.”

When the Berlin Wall fell in November 1989 and as reunification was completed in October 1990, the impetus for a national Holocaust memorial grew even stronger. As I have suggested, East and West Germany dealt with the memory of the Holocaust similarly at first but while Eastern memory remained amnesiac, West Germany slowly

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began to deal with the issue of the Nazi past in the 1960s and even more so through the *Historikerstreit*. Merging these two vastly different memories of the Nazi past alone would prove to be a difficult task, but German reunification also meant the sudden combination of two different peoples with different histories, cultures, languages, economic systems, etc. In a way that almost no other event in history has produced, German reunification required a complete redefinition of what it meant to be German. German national identity had to be re-characterized, which raised in an extreme way the question of dealing with the Nazi past and the Holocaust and how those events would fit into the new Germany that was being created. Thus, reunification played an extremely significant role in driving the *Denkmalstreit* that really began to gain momentum in the early 1990s. \(^{31}\)

Initial questions of where the monument was to be located, exactly who the monument would memorialize and what form the monument would take were heatedly debated in newspaper articles and editorials, in speeches, and in public forums. Key participants from the *Historikerstreit* became active again as the issues from the previous debate took a new form. They included historians Eberhard Jäckel, Jürgen Kocka and Klaus Hildebrand and philosopher Jürgen Habermas. In the *Denkmalstreit*, however, there were many new important figures who were not historians, including architectural experts James Young and Salomon Korn, politicians Ulrich Roloff-Momin and Peter Conradi, and journalists Henryk Broder and Thomas Lackmann. Instead of debating these issues raised by the *Historikerstreit* on a theoretical level, the *Denkmalstreit* took

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the issues and applied them to a tangible object, a Holocaust memorial that would be visible to the world, but especially to Germany.

From its inception, the memorial caused controversy, particularly because it was to be dedicated only to the Jews and not to all victim groups. This was unacceptable to a large faction of people, and particularly to Romani Rose, the major leader of the Sinti and Roma people. In October 1992, the Berliner Senat decided that the monument would, as originally proposed, memorialize just the Jewish victims of the Third Reich and other victim groups would have their own government-supported memorials nearby. In November, the Berliner Senat also approved the FEDJE proposed location for the memorial: the Ministergärten (Minister Gardens) on the area where the old Reichskanzlerei (Chancellery of the Empire) used to sit. The Senat also decided during this time that the funding for this memorial would flow in part from the national government (Bundesregierung or Bund), the government of Berlin (Land Berlin or Land) and in part from individual and corporate sponsors to be brought in by the FEDJE.

These important factors having been decided, beginning in April 1994 these three sponsoring agencies – Bund, Land and FEDJE – held an artistic competition for the design of the memorial. A combination of professional and amateur artists, engineers and architects submitted 528 designs. In March 1995, a committee of representatives from the disciplines of politics, history, architecture, urban design and art, selected by the three primary stakeholders, recommended two of the proposals as finalists to the FEDJE. Christine Jakob-Marks proposed a large concrete slab that would cover the entire open area on which the names of the approximately 4.2 million Jewish victims for whom there were documented deaths would be engraved. This slab would be tilted upwards across the
area to give an odd feeling of perspective distortion. Simon Ungers proposed giant steel beams, supported by T-bars, which would have the names of the concentration camps cut out of them. As the light shone through it would project the names of the camps onto the ground.

Both of these designs elicited immense debate about the ability of art or concrete to capture the enormity of the Holocaust in a physical structure. Further, this argument about design renewed earlier debates over for whom the memorial should be built, this time adding the complex question whether this memorial was actually more for the Germans than the victims. Finally, the disappointment over the failure of the first competition without the debate over Holocaust memory fading raised the question whether there was need or justification for a memorial at all. The controversy persisted throughout 1995, and the public increasingly criticized the Jakob-Marks design, which was seen as the favorite of the two. Interestingly, a third design received the most public attention at this time. The design proposed by Frieder Schnack and Renata Stih, involved a series of bus-stops throughout Berlin at which people could board colored buses labeled with the name of a concentration camp, that would take them to the specified camp. While this proposal was a clear favorite among the public, the committee did not seriously consider it following the first competition.

Unable to make any progress because of the controversies and mounting debates surrounding the first competition, in April 1996 the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE agreed to end the first competition without declaring a winning memorial design. Additionally, they decided to begin a new discussion about a memorial to the Jewish victims on the same location. Following a debate over the DEJE in the Bundestag, in
August 1996 the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE agreed to hold a multi-part colloquium about how best to proceed with the memorial in early 1997. Meanwhile, the debate about the memorial continued in the newspapers. In January, February and April 1997 the three forums discussed the problems of the first competition and the topics of why Germany needed a national Holocaust memorial, where it should be located, and what it should represent. The result of these forums and government consultation with international experts was a second competition that took place beginning in June 1997.

In the second competition the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE allowed entry by invitation only. The nominating committee invited the nine first, second and third place winners from the original competition in addition to sixteen new artists and architects. Once again this competition produced no clear winning design immediately. But after a renewed period of public and government discussion throughout late 1997 and early 1998, a design proposed by Peter Eisenman and Richard Serra began receiving the most attention. This design originally consisted of more than four thousand concrete blocks filling the entire proposed area. After much discussion and debate, Eisenman modified his proposal to be just 3,000 Stele and to include an information center below the memorial, as had been proposed by Michael Naumann, Minister of Culture and Media. Finally in June, 1999, the German Parliament voted decisively for the building of this monument by agreeing to pay for most of its fifty-four million Mark cost.  

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Thesis

As I have suggested, the Historikerstreit of the 1980s raised important but complicated questions about German memory of the Holocaust. The decade long process of determining whether and how a national German Holocaust memorial should be built was largely a product of the important issues that developed out of the Historikerstreit: the singularity of the Holocaust, the need for continued shame, the fear of forgetting the crimes and the desire for a new national identity. The Denkmalstreit proceeded from this larger discussion about the Holocaust and German national identity. Current historiography on the Denkmalstreit, however, remains thin and primarily discusses the debate over the German national Holocaust memorial as one of many debates that prove a particular point. Here I will discuss three of the most relevant works and will end with a statement as to how my thesis will fit into this historiography.

Brian Ladd’s The Ghosts of Berlin breaks apart the debate over the DEJE as one of many examples of how memory of the historical events has been created, debated and displayed in Berlin over time. His argument is that the history of a location can be revealed through the stories of the monuments and buildings within that place and that the controversies over these memorials are ways of dealing with the past. Karen Till’s The New Berlin describes the debate over the Holocaust memorial and agrees that the constructed memorial reveals a German consensus on many of the issues raised. However, she emphasized the failure of the memorial as a national memory place in Berlin because she saw the final design as permanently establishing in German memory the difference between “German” and “Jew.” Peter Carrier’s Holocaust Monuments and

National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989 compares the debate over the Holocaust memorial in Berlin to similar debates in France in order to make a statement about how, in some cases, memorials do not actually honor history. Rather, Carrier argues that memorials serve a contemporary purpose of developing debate and discussion over controversial issues in order to promote a societal consensus.35

In this study, I seek to extend this historiography by breaking down the key issues and arguments of the Denkmalstreit by theme and analyzing them with relation to theoretical concepts of national identity. In each chapter I will examine one significant theme from the debate and show how the Germans struggled with the issue before coming to some kind of consensus on the topic. These agreements, though not pleasing everyone involved, finally not only enabled the memorial to be built, but also exhibited the German nation’s strength and persistence in coming to terms with its past.

I argue that it was not that these issues were resolved, because they certainly continue today, that has made a difference for national identity. Rather, a new German national identity has developed because these public discussions have produced a concrete piece of public historical remembrance. Once and for all, the “defensive amnesia” of earlier generations that has affected German national identity has broken. Moreover, in choosing a memorial that did not limit German memory of the Holocaust to a single statement of universal experience on its history, but left it open to continued discussion, the Germans have shown that openness and debate will create their national identity. Through the process of the Denkmalstreit, the Federal Republic of Germany has proven itself to be capable of dealing with its tragic past in a mature way that many other

nations can only admire. It was through the agonizing and tedious *Denkmalstreit* that Germans were finally able to reveal a pride in their nation.
Chapter I
Learning from the Holocaust:
The Debate over Meaning and Responsibility

During the debate over the German national Holocaust memorial, publisher Wolf Jobst Siedler made the observation that “one devalues a memorial who inflates its meaning.”¹ The discussion about what the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas (DEJE) would mean for the German nation was an extremely prolonged one that vacillated between placing too much import on the memorial and not seeing its potential well enough. In this chapter I explore the larger question of whether or not to build a Holocaust memorial at all and, having determined to build a memorial, what that memorial would mean for Germany and the world. I will begin to discuss this debate over meaning by examining the reasons why Germany needed to consider a memorial in the first place. In turn, I examine the discussion about whether Germany actually did need a national Holocaust memorial. Finally, I look at the collective nature of memory stored in memorials and its role in developing a national identity. As this chapter will show, the DEJE and even just the debate surrounding it was essential for the development of a new German national identity after reunification that included atonement for the Nazi crimes.

High Time to Consider This

As I suggested in the introduction, the question of how to deal with Holocaust memory in Germany was a topic of heated discussion throughout the 1980’s and the Historikerstreit. The conservative faction sought to finally put the Holocaust into historical memory instead of having to live with it in the present. The liberals, in

¹ “Man entwertet ein Mahnmal, indem man es inflationiert” - Wolf Jobst Siedler, “Wie ein Mahnmal durch Zerrreden entwertet wird,” Berliner Zeitung (8/15/1998) as presented in Ute Heimrod, Der Denkmalstreit – das Denkmal? Die Debatte um das “Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.” Eine Dokumentation (Berlin: Philo Verlagsgesellschaft, 1999), 1093. Henceforth, the page number following the periodical citation will refer to where that article can be found within the above volume.
opposition, thought that the Holocaust was an event that should not be forgotten or put in context with other historical events but kept as a unique and shameful part of German society. As we have seen, the issue of a permanent memorial came to the fore in 1988 when the Berliner Senat debated what to do with the land of the former Gestapo headquarters. In 1989, under the auspices of the civic action group Perspektive Berlin, historian Eberhard Jäckel and television journalist Lea Rosh, suggested a permanent memorial to the murdered Jews. When they did so, the SPD-GP (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands – Die Grünen) coalition that led the Land Berlin agreed that it was finally time to realize this permanent form of Holocaust memory. The primary reason “why” people seemed to agree with Perspektive Berlin that Germany needed to consider a permanent memorial to the Jews needed was this issue of time. As Die Tageszeitung said, “it is a shame that forty-five years after the Holocaust in Germany there is still no national memorial for the victims of National Socialism.” Especially after 1991, with reunification and the decision to move the German capital back to Berlin, the liberals’ hope was that “the question of a national holocaust memorial in the place of the murderers will become again highly urgent,” as the typically liberal-center Die Tageszeitung wrote. As time passed, increasingly articles said that the German nation was late in discussing, never mind building, this memorial and that it was therefore imperative that it be built now. This sense of urgency and the need to make a decision

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4 See, for example: Senator Wolfgang Nagel, “Das Nationale Holocaust-Denkmal ist längst Überfällig.” Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen Berlin (Hg.) Pressmitteilung (5/5/1994), 217. Rainer
about the memorial continued to overshadow the entire course of the debate over the
design and building of the DEJE.

Besides the government’s move back to Berlin, another reason that made the issue
of a permanent Holocaust memorial urgent was that the 45 years between Nazi times and
this discussion meant that many people directly involved in the Holocaust, both
perpetrators and surviving victims, had died. Until those who had supported or perhaps
even carried out the policies of racial genocide began to die, it would have been arguably
difficult to begin a truly critical examination of the Nazi past. With many of the Nazi
generation having passed away and at least retired from positions of power out of the
public eye, liberals thought of a Holocaust memorial that “now can one finally begin,” as
historian and author Ute Frings stated in the progressive Frankfurter Rundschau.5
Journalist Henryk Broder accurately wrote that “now the time is ripe for a holocaust
memorial.”6 This is precisely what the debate over the Holocaust memorial, all ten years
of it, was about – bringing this long overdue memorial to fruition.

The third argument for considering a national Holocaust memorial compared
Germany’s Holocaust memory to the world’s. The conclusion: everyone else already had
a memorial, so Germany ought to have one too. The Holocaust did not just affect
Germans and Germany, but people and nations across Europe. As such, it was relevant to
make the following comparison, as Lea Rosh did in 1988:

5 “nun könnte man endlich beginnen” - Ute Frings, “Nationales Holocaust-Denkmal – für wen?,”
Frankfurter Rundschau (7/10/1992), 99.
6 “Deswegen ist die Zeit reif für ein Holocaust-Denkmal”- Henryk M. Broder, “Abgestürzte Flugzeuge,”
Der Tagesspiegel (1/17/1995), 238.
In Germany, the land of the murderers, the land of the inventors of this singular genocide, there is no single memorial that remembers the murder of the more than five million dead Jews murdered by the Germans. France has one such memorial. Italy has one, Belgium as well. The Norwegians remember their dead, as do the Hungarians. Only we do not.\(^7\)

She ended with an imperative to end the scandal and bring about such an act of remembrance and reconciliation in Germany. The completion of Washington DC’s Holocaust memorial and museum in 1993 brought this comparison to the fore. A country not directly involved in the propagation of the Holocaust as it happened having at least one Holocaust memorial made it apparent that Germany was in fact lagging severely behind in terms of historicizing its own Holocaust memory when compared to other nations.\(^8\) This negative comparison was not the complete argument, however; liberals and those who supported the Holocaust memorial drew the important conclusion that Germany actually shamed itself by not having one, a topic that I will discuss later in this chapter.\(^9\)

The opposition generally considered arguments of urgency and shame to be “irritating.”\(^10\) Their thought was that, after years of hearing that it was time and that the matter was urgent, the little forward progress that could be seen was disheartening. This was especially true after 1996 when the Bund, Land and FEDJE effectively voided the


\(^8\) Christine Reichert, “Erschreckend,” Berliner Zeitung (7/7/1992), 98.


first design competition, as discussed in the introduction and Chapter Four.\textsuperscript{11} However, especially by 1998 while the results of the second design competition were under discussion, those in favor of building the \textit{DEJE} were not willing to accept the arguments that said the memorial was not necessary. The pro-\textit{DEJE} faction argued that for the three years between competitions it was still alright to be against the memorial, but “now it is wrong. The Memorial must be built, even now.”\textsuperscript{12} The \textit{Land Berlin} and \textit{FEDJE} were steadfast in their determination to build the memorial throughout the course of the more than ten-year long debate.

\textbf{Who says we need this?}

The desire for a \textit{DEJE} was not definitive even within the Jewish community; they believed that it was actually the German nation that had a need for the memorial, even though the German public seemed not to want it. The thoughts of the Jewish community on this topic were important because, after all, this was the community for whom the \textit{Bundesregierung} was supposedly building the memorial, as I will discuss in the early parts of the “for whom” debate in Chapter Two. The editor of \textit{Der Tagesspiegel}, Thomas Lackmann, said in 1996 that “even from many Jews one hears that not they themselves, above all the Germans need this memorial.”\textsuperscript{13} In 1998, the liberal \textit{Süddeutsche Zeitung} quoted German Culture Minister Michael Naumann, \textit{SPD}, as saying that none of his American Jewish friends supported the memorial.\textsuperscript{14} This seems to reveal that at least a


portion of the Jewish community did not need or want a Holocaust memorial because they knew and would always know what happened in the Holocaust. It was the perpetrators who they thought would forget. That is not to say, however, that all Jews agreed with this perspective because, as we will see later in this chapter and thesis, many Jews spoke out in favor of the memorial and argued on various sides of each topic.

More importantly, there was a consistent undercurrent of popular opposition to the DEJE that expressed itself in different ways throughout the debate. One example of this was four periodicals that presented what they portrayed as general “public opinion” about the memorial’s conceptualization and design process. Interestingly, most newspapers claimed that the public did not want a national Holocaust memorial, which seems to indicate that the movement to build one was driven by an elite, not the general population. In 1994, as the first design competition progressed, the conservative weekly Focus posited that most people were unhappy with so many Holocaust memorials already in Berlin. Reflecting the increasing dismay with the inability of the Bund, Land and FEDJE to pick a winning design, the liberal Berlin-daily, Der Tagesspiegel, said in 1996 that “the Berliners need no national Holocaust memorial.” In 1997, as the competition progressed, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung wrote that most Germans found memorials to be “horrors.” Finally, in 1998, as Eisenman and Serra began to discus revamping their proposal, the liberal monthly publication Merkur stated that “daily in

Germany a culture against the memorial has been built.”\textsuperscript{18} This seems to have been a result of the length of the debate, which had lasted for almost ten years at that point; people were tired of this \textit{DEJE} proposition and thought that it would be better to forget it. According to the press, despite the supposed necessity and urgency of considering such a national Holocaust memorial, it was no longer the public that called for it – it was the political and intellectual elite. I believe this revealed the desire of the elite to make Germany favorable once again in their own eyes and in the eyes of the world, while at the same time showed that the public did not yet want to actively deal with this part of their history.

The skeptical conclusion many reached was that only the politicians wanted this memorial. This view became especially prominent in the aftermath of the failed first design competition in 1996 and again in 1998 as the second competition passed the one-year mark with no definitive decision. In 1996, Thomas Lackmann said that it was only the politicians who “above everything carry the opinion of the necessity” of a national memorial.\textsuperscript{19} Many newspaper articles echoed this sentiment, that “it is a wish of politicians,” especially following the first competition.\textsuperscript{20} The feeling seemed to be that if Germany was incapable of deciding on a memorial design and of actually getting the \textit{DEJE} built, than they did not really need this memorial. Therefore, it must have been the politicians who, despite knowing the public did not need the memorial, sought “to

increase memory of the crimes of NS times.” 

Professor of Political Science Peter Reichel argued further that “no one in Parliament would like to put forward” that the memorial was unnecessary because that would be a bad political move. Overall, the arguments for and against the necessity of the DEJE presented an interesting contradiction: it was a shame both that Germany did not have a memorial and that it had waited so long to consider one, but only a particular group of elites actually wanted the memorial. That really seems to say, as I have previously stated, that there was a large segment of German society that was not yet ready or willing to deal with the Nazi past. What is left to consider, therefore, is whether Germans really needed a Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe – the next topic of this chapter.

**Not Needed: We have the real places**

In Chapter Three and Four, I will briefly touch on the issue of the memorial’s design and form as it related to real historical locations related to the Holocaust. While in those chapters I will show how this was used as an argument against a museum design for the memorial, here I will discuss how some thought that the DEJE itself was superfluous because the real historical places in which the Holocaust occurred still existed. In particular, these real historical locations refer to KZs, whose remnants still exist throughout Germany. As early as 1995, as everyone waited for the review of the first design competition to begin, Der Tagesspiegel argued critically that that the attention put on creating a memorial could be better spent preserving real Nazi sites. The argument supporting this criticism was two-fold. First, as Der Tagesspiegel noted, building a

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national Holocaust memorial would lead to the development of the artificial instead of the real.²⁴ Given the fact that these real places were still available, should Germans not root their memories deeply in those locations instead of in a construct meant to represent them conceptually? According to this argument, memory of the Holocaust could only be genuine “where the history itself occurred” and the DEJE was therefore unnecessary because it did not further memory of the Holocaust.²⁵ Second some feared that, despite government reassurance to the contrary, the new memorial would turn Bund funding and everyone’s attention from these historical places.²⁶ The fear was that this would cause the Germans to forget the real, or at least to let the real sites fall into disrepair.

A counter-argument arose to the idea that the real historical locations should supersede a central memorial. While most other victim groups had a particular KZ, a place of persecution or even a country to which they could go in order to mourn and remember, the Jewish victims were without such a place. As Eberhard Jäckel suggested, the murder of the European Jews was not just in one place, it was everywhere. They therefore had no one gravesite, no one place of mourning. Since Germany had created this need, it should provide such a place.²⁷ Anja Paumen, a woman with Berliner-Jewish background, wrote in the liberal-centrist Die Zeit that she “would like to have a central place in Germany, in which [she] can think of the dead relatives, in which [she] can think

of the sorrows of the descendents, and the appalling consequences of those years.”

Both Jäckel and Paumen, however, were speaking out against Andreas Nachama, a Rabbi and director of the Topography of Terror exhibit, who argued that the Jewish community did not need a Holocaust memorial as they had had “one such memorial in the Jewish Cemetery in Weissensee since 1945.”

It is important to note that this is a substantially different argument than that which the Jewish community will make in Chapter Two – that the national Holocaust memorial be to the Jews alone. In Chapter Two I will show that if there was to be a memorial, despite being a topic of disagreement among the Jews to begin with, the Jewish community and German society reached a consensus that it should be to the Jews alone. This does not imply that the Jewish community agreed that the memorial was necessary in the first place, and as shown here, there was in fact dissent within the Jewish community about its necessity.

Returning to the primary argument that the real historical locations had to be considered, in the wake of the first competition the argument changed slightly to include disappointment with the winning designs. As Thomas Krüger, MdB-SPD, argued, he thought there would never be a design for the memorial that was capable of expressing “these infinitely terrible crimes” as the real locations inevitably would. He went on to say that any attempt to displace historical locations with an artistic design would be “artificial” and could therefore easily be overlooked or even forgotten, meaning the

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DEJE would fail.\textsuperscript{31} As people began to lose hope that the first design competition could produce worthwhile memorial proposals, these arguments seem appropriate because people were disheartened.

However, as Germany moved towards a second design competition, the arguments changed again to accept a memorial as long as it was ascertained “that the memorial will not be erected at the cost of the preservation of historical scenes.”\textsuperscript{32} The support for this argument was so strong that renowned memory scholar and architecture expert James E. Young, who supported building the memorial, emphasized that regardless of the government’s decision on the memorial, it would never be complete outside the context of the real historical locations.\textsuperscript{33} In other words, a Holocaust memorial would only succeed if it did not intend to replace the places of history; it ought to refer to them and direct visitors to those locations as well. This balance of supporting the real locations while moving forward with a DEJE was the consensus reached.

Reconciliation and Antisemitism: Remembering the Victims

In Chapter Two I will emphasize the continued awareness of perpetrator versus victim identity in Germany and discuss how it played out in terms of the question for whom the DEJE would be built. In the discussion over the need for a DEJE, this victim/perpetrator conflict took a different form – in the conservative call for a memorial that would serve a reconciliatory function. As early as 1994, going into the first design competition, the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung focused on the DEJE as “a

\textsuperscript{32}“Dass das Denkmal nicht auf Kosten der Erhaltung historischer Schauplätze errichtet wird.” Aleida Assmann, “Kommentar,” Senatsverwaltung fuer Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (1/10/1997), 616.
sign of the reconciliation” between victims’ descendents and the German majority society.\(^{34}\) According to Salomon Korn, this memorial would be “an important step in the still long outstanding normalization in contact between Jews and non-Jews in Germany.”\(^{35}\) In this view, the German majority would offer this memorial to the victims, the Jews, as a peace offering. This would then lead to forgiveness and the ability to move on from the past. Obviously for a nation still aware of its internal divisions between perpetrator and victim the DEJE, through the reconciliation it would theoretically bring, would become an important step towards establishing an inclusive national identity, a topic I will discuss again later in this chapter. As time progressed and this language of the memorial as a form of reconciliation strengthened, more liberal voices, like historian Christian Meier, began to fear that a memorial would be an alibi for “real” reconciliation with the victims. From this perspective, the fear was that that Germany would use the memorials instead of public apologies or monetary compensation for the victims.\(^{36}\)

Another liberal argument that arose out of the overall discussion over finding a balance between the victims and perpetrators was that in attempting to bring the Holocaust into public memory it would provoke right-wing factions in Germany. The liberals feared that it would stir reactions against the memorial and be the “basis for the practical radicalization of German ideologies” because a memorial that represented

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sympathy for Jewish victims would undoubtedly provoke a response from those who still retained anti-Semitic feelings. Hungarian author and later President of the Academy of Art in Berlin, Gyorgy Konrad, suggested that building the memorial for the Jews alone, in the proposed scale, would automatically “provide new anti-Semitism,” developed out of resentment from other victim groups and perhaps even the public. The Sinti and Roma were unhappy with the decision for a memorial to the Jews alone, and others agreed with them as Chapter Two will show. Der Tagesspiegel, however, pointed out that if a memorial concerning the Holocaust, a part of Germany’s past that had to be dealt with, increased anti-Semitism, than German society was “threatened by something far worse than a memorial.” Further, that perhaps it was this concern, that anti-Semitic sentiments were so strong they were actually a political threat, that the country ought to consider.

**German Shame and Collective Memory**

As discussed in the Introduction, the *Historikerstreit* raised the issue of German shame to a level of high importance. During the debate, two sides were clearly established: what I call Normalizers, who supported the conservative perspective that thought Germany should move past shame and what I call Resistors, who supported the liberal perspective that thought Germany should continue to deal with the consequences of its past actions. Those who proposed the *DEJE* came from this latter perspective and suggested that Germany needed a Holocaust memorial because finally “the murderers

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37 “anderseits Kraftquelle für die praktische Radikalität deutscher Ideologien” - Andreas Krause, “Im Tode vereint, im Denkmal getrennt,” Berliner Zeitung (1/10/1997), 140.
must be shamed.”

Following the end of World War II and the fall of the Nazi regime, there were too many Germans who had sympathized with the Nazi party to punish all of them in any appropriate way. Since the end of the war, therefore, these former Nazi supporters had slowly reassumed their roles in positions of power and of cultural influence, allowed to return to work by the occupying forces because, simply, they knew their jobs best. According to President of the Academy of Art and Kultursenator (Senator for Cultural Affairs) Ulrich Roloff-Momin, in those positions they “contributed to displacing the memory of the crimes in which they were not even disinterested.”

Without a proper reckoning with history, without a memorial, this German majority at the time was able to engage again in the world without ever accounting for their crimes. Already in this chapter, the issue of shame has arisen twice. In the first instance, it was a shame that the Germans did not have such a memorial. In the second, it was to say that other nations were shaming the Germans by having memorials first.

Resisters also believed, however, that while the memorial would bring German shame to public view, “no matter how successful the memorial, it will not relieve this blame.” A memorial would not reduce the shame that the Germans felt for their past. According to this perspective, a present day German could and must feel shame for the Nazi past. Further, the monument “should express shame, the collective shame that one as a German belongs to the people, that the main culprits produced, tolerated, carried and

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supported.  

"Berliner Zeitung" Feature’s editor Jens Jessen suggested that German shame, established in the memorial, would actually be a way of purifying the Germans and their culture.  

Jessen took the position that the memorial would force Germans to deal with shame, reconcile with it and thereby move on. 

Even among those who believed that shame was a necessity, there were concerns about the use of shame in a memorial. First, while recognizing that “one cannot think about the murdered without shame,” social historian Professor Jürgen Kocka questioned whether a memorial was actually capable of evoking this shame. 

His thought was echoed by cultural scholar and author Christina von Braun later the same month when she questioned whether there really could be a memorial that remembered national shame, because she defined shame as something that resided “in the mortal and incomplete individual,” not in a nation or community. 

Second, while not questioning a memorial’s capability of expressing shame, historian Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner worried that the memorial would focus too much on individual shame and not enough on national shame for the event as a whole. 

As I will discuss in Chapters Three and Four, however, the consensus was that a memorial would be an adequate medium through which to exhibit national shame for the Holocaust.

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On the other side of the discussion were the Normalizers who believed that shame and guilt should have less of a presence in the memorial and German society. Martin Walser, a German writer, became a major German public figure in the late 1990’s for statements like the following: “instead of being thankful for the incessant presentation of our shame, I begin to look the other way.”48 Walser was a perfect example of someone who was disillusioned with attempts to memorialize the Nazi crimes and was at the point of belief that having no memorial would be better. Some from this perspective were less insistent than Walser, but still thought there should be less of a representation of shame. Comments from this perspective included those such as “the commitment to guilt must be simple and meaningful; not its form, its inscription must stand in the forefront.”49 Some Germans regarded “guilt” as such to be a wholly inaccurate portrayal for the memorial because “guilt sinks in the grave with the guilty.”50 A present day German could not feel guilty about the crimes his or her grandparents had committed; she or he had no control over their actions and was therefore not responsible. This raised the unsolvable and timeless question of how much responsibility a descendent generation can take for the actions of their grandparents. This opposition argument was one of many throughout the debate over the DEJE that reveal a continued hesitancy of the Germans in the process of dealing with the Holocaust in contemporary memory.

It would not, however, be individual shame; the memorial would express the shame of the German community and allow Germany as a whole to bear the burden of

shame and responsibility, so that the individual alone would not have to live with that
guilt. This perspective of, what I call, communal shame was first presented in 1995 but
was in fact the ultimate consensus reached regarding the memorial’s representation of
shame. German writer Bernhard Schulz argued that there could be no more individual
memory once those with the memories had died. “With the death of those involved . . .
the individual memory is definitively cut off from the collective realization.” In this
instance, it was the generation who had lived during the Third Reich who had died and
therefore what the Germans were struggling with was the form the collective memory,
which supersedes any one individual, would take.

Because those who had been involved in bringing Hitler to power and carrying
out the policies of Nazi racial genocide had almost all passed away, the ability to
“perpetuate” that familiarity with the Nazi crimes had faded. The state, then, had to take
on the role of the antecedent generations by giving the nation a form of collective,
national memory. Others turned this point of view slightly to say that the test for the
Holocaust memorial’s success would be whether or not those who had no connection to
the Third Reich, the newer generations, could still feel concerned with or bound to the
memory of the Nazi past. “Then it will manifest itself, whether it is an annoyance, taken
with indifference or truly summoned to remembrance.” Thus, memory of National
Socialist times had to pass into the collective memory realm – where the nation
remembered an event together as opposed to individually or within a family. Renowned

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52 “Mit dem Dahinsterben der Augenzeuge, . . . wo die individuelle Erinnerung endgültig von der
kollektiven Vergegenwärtigung abgelöst wird.” Bernhard Schulz, “Das Denkmal,” Der Tagesspiegel
(1/18/1995), 239.
53 “Dann wird sich zeigen, ob sie ein Ärgernis ist, gleichgültig lässt oder wirklich zur Erinnerung
459.
German cultural scholar, Aleida Assmann, defined collective memory as it related to the memorial in the following way: “collective memory as a nation is in this sense a trans-generationally perpetuated knowledge of the history of the crimes that were begun by the Germans and remain connected to their name.”

**Didactic**

The argument that Germany needed the DEJE as a place for communal Holocaust memory and the relief of the individual burden of shame to the nation brings us to another important issue: the need for a physical representation of Holocaust memory for future generations. The memorial’s original purpose was to remember the Nazi’s anti-Semitism and its catastrophic results. Arguably, one of the best arguments that Germany needed a national Holocaust memorial was that through it “the terrible sorrow of the murder of millions of Jews will never fall into oblivion.” Especially with the death of so many people directly connected to the Nazi era, the younger generations were losing direct links to that past. Increasingly, young Germans could not ask their grandparents or even parents what had happened from 1933-1945, and therefore the lessons had to be taught not from individual memory but through schools and museums. With this issue came the concern that should “forgetting” begin to occur, than the Holocaust could potentially happen again. According to *Der Tagesspiegel*, “this imperative alone,” that Auschwitz must not be repeated, “justifies the venture of a monument.” Therefore,

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supporters of this perspective argued Germany must take proper precaution to preserve the memory of its crimes for future generations.

On the issue of forgetting, once again the Normalizer and Resister perspectives are useful. Salomon Korn clearly represented the Normalizer position when he said that because in the memorial “the individual memory is relieved [to the collective] – the comfortable forgetting can take its course.”57 By this Korn, and those who took the Normalization position, thought that the best possible path the German nation could take was to move past the constant focus on the Holocaust and allow Germans to go on with their individual lives without being constantly reminded of the Holocaust. A portion of German society was uncomfortable with this type of “forgetting” that Korn described, as I will discuss presently. In 1995, after the first competition failed to produce any actionable results, journalist Malte Lehming wrote that:

The historiography of an epoch will often be prefaced through the erection of memorials. The holocaust seems to escape this historiography. Apparently the past in Germany is still too lively to be ready or ripe for a memorial.58

This last point, that the historical past was still too alive in Germany to be concretized, seemed to be particularly relevant and true given the vivacity, length and complexity of the debate over the Holocaust memorial. The Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungs wesen (Senate Committee for Building and Housing) suggested that Germans were afraid to follow through on building the memorial because it would mean “finally,

from now on an end must be made to this type of coming to terms with the past.”

In other words, that the memorial would end conversation and the presence of the Holocaust in public thought. Based on the opposition arguments I have discussed, this seems to be an accurate statement. Most people did seem to be afraid to create a concrete memorial to the Holocaust because they did not want to have to deal with the past in that ever-present capacity.

Those I presented in the introduction as wanting to prevent the “normalization” of German history saw that the memorial would be important for the didactic role it would serve to prevent any forgetting of the Holocaust. The fundamental basis for this didactic function was the idea that “the past cannot be mastered” and that Germans must continually deal with it for the rest of their history. In this regard, the memorial, would “instruct people about the crimes committed by their compatriots,” without relying on the personal, individual memories that were quickly disappearing. By presenting Holocaust history collectively, the memorial would prevent “the accustomed practice to blandish or distort the history of a nation,” as often happened with individual memories. This result would come about because the memorial would be an official statement of the shame and guilt of the nation that neither past nor future generations could erase or euphemize. With such a memorial, Germany could not forget the Holocaust. Because Germans could not erase their past, they must pass their history on through the generations. The

Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen said of the purpose of the memorial that “we want to continually tell the story that must be told. We want the truth,” which could only be accomplished through a concrete, didactic form of memory.63

Even within this anti-forgetting perspective, there was concern that using the medium of a memorial to prevent forgetting would cause the inevitable “concretization” of memory. Those who used the term were referring to taking a piece of history and freezing it in place, in a specific form, communicating a specific message. In other words, “memorials are important mosaic stones in the display of memory” because “they are static.”64 For fulfilling the didactic purpose of the memorial and for the purpose of building national identity, Germany had to decide on the message it wished to communicate about the Holocaust. This single unified message was essential to creating an historical definition of the Holocaust. However, many found problems with this function. Critics suggested that memorials actually “take memory prisoner” by limiting it to one finite perspective and portraying it as one, definitive national history.65 Further, in doing so, the critics said “memorials ban the unspoken” because they tell you “everything” that you need to know about the past; they do not require you to look beyond them for further meaning and information.66 By presenting a single message as the official national perspective on the Holocaust, as a national Holocaust memorial would certainly do, the fear was that a memorial would eliminate the dialectic of the

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64 “So sehr Denkmäler wichtige Mosaiksteine im Erinnern darstellen, sind sie statisch” - Michel Friedman, “Das Drama, die Unlust und die Unverschämten,” Der Tagesspiegel (1/18/1995), 239.
Holocaust that had kept it alive for so long, challenging members of the German society not to forget.

Those on the extreme side of the anti-forgetting perspective actually thought that the memorial would help people to forget and that it would provide an alibi for dealing with real history. Roman Herzog, *Bundespräsident* (President of Germany), saw in “every attempt to bring the crimes of the Nazis to historical memory, ultimately only a special form of intellectual cowardess.”67 By this he meant that instead of continuing to deal with the past and grapple with it in an active way, the memorial condemned German memory of the Holocaust to passive memory, where it was looked at but not dealt with. This, he considered to be intellectual weakness. Instead of provoking memory, people like Herzog thought that the public would use a memorial to excuse themselves from active forms of memory, like discussion. Because a memorial would mean “the replacement of memory with the rituals of memory,” people would allow themselves to consider the Holocaust and Nazi crimes only when they visited the memorial.68 Instead of forcing people to carry their historical guilt or shame with them, these byproducts of memory were quickly “deposited in “gravestones” of cement and steel” to be forgotten there for the rest of time.69

Still others argued that, despite this talk of needing not to forget, for fifty years the Germans had had no national Holocaust memorial and most had not yet forgotten the Holocaust despite this. From this point of view, the memorial would be superfluous, and

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67: “ist jeder Versuch, die Verbrechen des Nationalsozialismus aus der geschichtlichen Erinnerung auszubleenden, letztlich nur eine besondere Form intellektueller Feigheit” - Roman Herzog, “Feigheit ist das letzte, was ich von meinem Volk erleben möchte,” *Frankfurter Rundschau* (1/28/1999), 1228.
thus unneeded, for precisely that reason. An article in Der Tagesspiegel postulated that the mere fact that German society had spent so long debating the Holocaust memorial was proof that no one was going to forget.\textsuperscript{70} Particularly between the two competitions, April 1996 through June 1997, the sentiment was strong that in Germany this national Holocaust memorial was unnecessary because “one needs no memory help here;” the memory of the past was still too strong and vibrant for a physical memorial to be of value.\textsuperscript{71} Jewish publicist Peter Moses-Krause stated that he did “not need this memorial for remembering [his] history in Germany – never mind how important, pretty or expensive.”\textsuperscript{72} This argument may have seemed logical for some who still had a personal or close generational connection to the National Socialist past. For them it was not necessary to formalize this memory in memorials because it was so clear in their individual memories. Professor Peter Reichel even suggested that perhaps “the formula that only through memory of the Holocaust will prevent its repetition” was incorrect.\textsuperscript{73} He suggested that the Germans look beyond the passive memory that a memorial would encourage a form of active historical responsibility in the world that would eradicate the possibility of another Holocaust, a topic that I will discuss later in this chapter.

Because those who supported this perspective believed that the DEJE would quiet intellectual debate about the Holocaust, many thought that the concretization of memory created by a national memorial would put the Holocaust into the annals of history.

\textsuperscript{73} “mit der Formel abgeblockt, dass nur die Erinnerung an den Holocaust vor dessen Widerholung schütze” - Peter Reichel, “Nationale Pietät – ein deutsches Politikum,” Universitas Nr. 603 (9/1996), 557.
forever. They saw it as “a gravestone . . . over the German past,” over National Socialist times, putting it to rest in the minds of individual Germans. Although trying to make the opposite point that this was actually a good thing, architect Salomon Korn perfectly portrayed the anti-forgetting perspective’s point by saying that “if the memory is concretized in the memorial, than it is reified for everyone.” In other words, taking the memory out of public debate and ritualizing it would make the Holocaust memory a part of the past, not the present. A memorial makes history something to be looked at and thought about, but keeps it from being living history in the way that events being debated in the present are. What would become the ultimate consensus on this topic was what Der Tagesspiegel suggested in 1995, that although the “ritualization of memory that accompanies the medium of memorials” was not necessarily sought after, it was a mandatory “cost for their erection.” As discussed earlier, putting the Holocaust into a memorial would place the burden of individual memory, thought and shame for these events on the community as a whole. Because this DEJE would exhibit the collective memory of the German nation, the memorial would help to establish a national identity. Thus, ritualization was not all negative because it required an acceptance of history on behalf of German society, and this “acceptance of history establishes identity” as CDU member Michel Friedman said.

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National Identity

Germany had been devastated by World War II both physically and psychologically and was then thrown into a 45 year period during which it was divided in quarters and then in half by conquering nations. As a result, reunification necessitated that Germany redefine its identity as a nation, as I discussed in the Introduction. During the debate over the DEJE, there was a general consensus that a central Holocaust memorial *would* establish a German national identity. The earliest formulations of this at the very beginning of the debate simply requested that the *FEDJE* make it clear to the German nation that the debate over the memorial and the memorial’s construction itself would be “a deciding part of their self-understanding in the present as well as in the future.”

During the first design competition, this message changed slightly. Now the memorial would be a piece of the new national identity because it was the Germans, through their thoughts, artwork and designs, that the memorial would exhibit.

In the uncertainty of the second competition, Thomas Lackmann questioned the reasoning behind a memorial in the first place, as we have discussed, and in doing so wondered if it should represent “‘the society’s understanding of itself.’” Lackmann said that “the plan to build a *DEJE* is hardly removed from the process of a new self-definition of the republic and capital.” Political commentator Konrad Schuller called the representation of Nazi memory aesthetically “the prerequisite for the new beginning as a

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80 “‘die Verständigung der Gesellschaft mit sich selbst’” - Thomas Lackmann, “Gefahr bei Glätte,” Der Tagesspiegel (1/12/1997), 625.
nation.” While he did not suggest an answer, Jürgen Kocka, whom he was quoting, was more confident about what the memorial would mean for Germany: it would be “a source of power and an identification of the strength of our community.” In other words, he located national identity in the nation’s ability to even envision, decide upon and build this memorial to such difficult memories. Even Bundeskanzler Helmut Kohl saw the memorial as “concerning the kernel of our self-understanding as a nation.” Clearly, the general consensus was that a DEJE would establish a new national identity and this was much needed especially in terms of coming to terms with the Holocaust.

Because the discussion of a memorial’s purpose showed that the Germans would allow it to play such a significant role in determining their national identity, the entire debate occurred in light of this idea. In other words, the more the Germans talked about the idea that this memorial would establish a national identity, the more true it seems that it actually would do so. The more true this became, and the more likely it was that a memorial would actually be built, the more there was concern that the DEJE would establish a new, negative national identity based on the Nazi past. This whole question of really considering the Holocaust forced Germans to rethink their entire past – from the great cultural history that produced Goethe, Schiller and Beethoven to the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. The fear was that, through the memorial, the unhappy memory of the Holocaust and all it implied would become the primary foundation for the new German national identity.

The concern that the DEJE would establish a negative national identity was expressed in two ways. The first was that, as discussed, the memorial would embody the guilt and/or shame of the German nation, causing Germany to have “a national self-awareness out of guilt.” Christina von Braun questioned whether it was appropriate to build a national community based on shame for the National Socialist past, as would occur should the government build a national Holocaust memorial. These opinions represented the paradox of trying to establish a confident, healthy nation when it must always know that it committed such dreadful crimes. The second problem presented even a bigger issue to German society: a national identity built on the Holocaust victims sacrificed the victims once again for the good of the whole. Through this line of reasoning, a DEJE would make the Jews double victims. Having been the victims of the Nazis from 1933-1945, now they would be the fundamental element of the national Holocaust memorial, which would become the foundation of a new German society and identity, albeit one in which they were included.

Many articles showed fear that the DEJE “could be used and abused as the foundation myth of a Berlin republic.” The fear of this stemmed not just from the contemporary discussions, but also from the government and public having observed the DDR (Deutsche Demokratische Republik – Communist East Germany 1949 – 1990) use the memory of Holocaust victims as a method of manipulative control, as I briefly
discussed in the introduction, which West Germans saw as “a cheap and cynical act.”

However, West Germans like journalist Henryk Broder admitted that the victims were “being misused a second time, this time by good Germans for a good purpose.” This misuse was the concern; this question of whether the establishment of a new German national identity really meant the subjection of Jewish victims to the “centerpieces for a suitable national collective.” The question was whether Germans really wanted to create a national identity based on this memorial that would carry German collective memory of the Holocaust.

**National Identity: What are we seeking?**

Having firmly established that this Holocaust memorial would be a source of new German national identity and self-perception, whether for good or bad, a great deal of conversation revolved around what the memorial should communicate. If the memorial was going to be the source of a new national identity, what would that identity be?

Former *MdB-CSU* and Cultural-political Speaker, Oscar Schneider, said the memorial had to communicate “a commitment to the human rights with which all people are born.” Given the specific wrongs the Nazis committed during the Holocaust, this was an understandable request. Peter Conradi, *MdB-SPD*, wanted the memorial “to incite meditation on guilt, shame and sorrow” to show that the nation would not stop

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considering the Holocaust as a result of the memorial.\textsuperscript{93} It should additionally “invoke humanity and peace” in contrast to the events that it memorialized.\textsuperscript{94} Dr. Burkhard Hirsch, \textit{MdB-FDP}, wanted the memorial to warn German society of “the fragile line that we call civilization that divides us from barbarism.”\textsuperscript{95} The new German national identity would take proper precaution against German society crossing this line because it would mean that they were aware that the line actually could be crossed, as it had been in order to make the Holocaust happen. Still others required that the memorial convey “the heights and depths of our whole story next to each other,”\textsuperscript{96} allowing “the shared German memory [to] be united over the former border strife between East and West.”\textsuperscript{97} In this way, the memorial would establish a national identity that sought to recognize the reunification and in doing so bring together both sides of the formerly divided Germany.

A second fundamental piece of the memorial’s establishment of a national identity concerned not just self-perception and internal identity, but world perception. Since the Nazi party had come to power in 1933, through Germany’s division in 1949 and the dramatic collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the nations of the world had observed Germany with both horror and amazement. Thus this new memorial had to demonstrate the new national identity of the Germans to the eyes of the world as well. The debate established three primary messages that the memorial ought to portray to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{93} “\textit{zum Nachdenken anregen, Schuld, Scham und Reue}” - Peter Conradi, “Informationsbrief vom 14. Januar 1997,” Berlin (1/14/1997), 632.
\item \textsuperscript{96} “\textit{als Nebeneinander von Höhen und Tiefen unserer Geschichte}” - Alfred Kerndl, “Ein Freskenraum der Leibstandarte,” \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} (1/8/1992), 83.
\item \textsuperscript{97} “\textit{Hier soll die geteilte deutsche Erinnerung auf dem ehemaligen Grenzstreifen zwischen Ost und West zwangsvereinigt werden}” - Michal Bodemann, “Neues vom Reichsopferfeld,” \textit{Die Tageszeitung} (2/19/1998), 1026.
\end{itemize}
those beyond their own borders. The first message was that Germany “has learned her terrible lesson” through careful consideration of the crimes and the Nazi past. As a result of this, the world would see that Germany would not be capable of falling once again into the patterns that had led to the rise of Hitler.

The second message was that Germany had definitively accepted the Holocaust along with the Nazi-era crimes as a “constituent element of the ethical, political self-understanding of the Bundesrepublik (Federal Republic of Germany).” In the immediate post-war period and especially in the DDR, it had not been clear whether Germany would ever take responsibility for its crimes. This memorial would allow Germany to “show the world that it has assumed without reserve the darkest pages of its past as a part of its unique history.” Further, this message would demonstrate that the Germans as a people “are historical people” in that they recognized they were a part of their national history, but a people who now act and make decisions “very differently from their history.”

The third message was that Germany was a self-confident nation in its place within Europe economically, socially and physically. On the one hand, this message of strength was intended to show that Germany was “a ‘self-aware’ nation rather than a self-aware nation of sorrow.” This message would suggest that Germans and the German nation were no longer bound by their historical deeds but had reconciled with them and

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moved beyond. On the other hand, the memorial’s location in Berlin, to which the
government had relocated in 1991, would symbolize that Germany was confident in its
location, that it had overcome the last physical effects of its trying history.103

The third essential piece of identity establishment that those concerned with the
memorial wished to see realized was historical responsibility. Of all of the concepts of
national identity the new memorial was to embody, this was probably the most
significant, pertaining both to the Germans as a nation and to their role in the world.
Something on which almost everyone seemed to agree was that no matter what the
memorial represented or did not represent, no matter for what concepts the memorial was
built with or without, it could not be built without a sense of obligatory responsibility.104
By this term, those who used it meant several things. First, that contemporary Germans
had the responsibility to ensure that future generations would “continue to engage with
the theme” of the Holocaust and not forget it.105 In another formulation, James Young
said that Germans had the responsibility to preserve the memory of “the irreplaceable
void that this persecution left behind.”106

Perhaps the most important way of discussing the historical responsibility of the
Germans was that the memorial would display the German community’s commitment to
the prevention of fascism and racism, not just in their country, but around the world.
Volker Beck, MdB-GP, said that the “memorial is a commitment to historical response
and shame in Germany. It is a memorial against anti-Semitism and each form of racism

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104 See, for example: Thomas Assheuer, “Die Aufgabe der Erinnerung,” Die Zeit (1/17/1997), 635.
105 “So werden sich die nachfolgenden Generationen weiter mit dem Thema beschäftigen müssen.” Anja
106 “an die unersetzbare Leere, die diese Vernichtung hinterlassen hat und an ihre eigene Verantwortung
für das Erinnern selbst.” James E. Young, “Die menschsmögliche Lösung des Unlösbar,” Der
Tagesspiegel (8/22/1998), 1117.
and, so with it, *for* human rights, democracy and due process."\(^{107}\) The German nation had the responsibility, as a result of their history, to resist or support these ideas before the rest of their world as their eternal penance for their past. Similarly, *Bundestagespräsident* Wolfgang Thierse said that the memorial would embody the responsibility of the Germans “never again to allow such a terrible dictator.”\(^{108}\) The prevention of a repetition this past in Germany and the world, he said, was the historical responsibility of both current and future generations. If the result of the debate over the Holocaust memorial brought only one conclusion for German society, this was it: that they had a responsibility, as a result of their past, to keep their mistakes from happening again.

**Conclusion**

Despite an uncertainty as to whether or not Germany actually needed a national Holocaust memorial, the debate over that question revealed just how important this memorial would be for German national identity. By revealing the issues of guilt versus shame, individual versus collective memory, reconciliation and moral responsibility, the discussion itself mandated that the memorial would have an impact on the nation’s new definition of itself. Whatever the memorial ended up presenting and exhibiting, that would be the foundation for the new national identity. During the debate, the intellectuals who had participated said that Germany’s success or failure in building this memorial would be a testament to its sincerity in wanting to overcome the crimes of their past. In order to determine this, the actions Germany has taken in the world to fulfill its historical

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responsibility must be examined. This would be the real test of German sincerity and of the true conclusion to the notion of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.

This larger question of whether or not Germany actually needed a national Holocaust memorial and what meaning it would take on in German society did not stand alone in the *Denkmalstreit*. Rather, it simultaneously raised many other questions about the Holocaust and a Holocaust memorial, several of which I have mentioned in the course of this chapter. Among those who assumed the necessity of the memorial from the beginning, including the majority of victim groups, the *FEDJE* and the *Land Berlin*, the next question that naturally arose was that of for whom the memorial should be built. If Germany was to have this national, central Holocaust memorial, who exactly did the Holocaust include? This is the topic of Chapter Two.
Chapter II  
Defining the Holocaust:  
The Debate to Determine its Victims

The Historikerstreit raised, among many other issues, the questions of the singularity of Jewish persecution in the Holocaust and of the connectedness between living Germans and their ancestors who had committed the crimes. Attempting to deal with these questions raised the broader question: What exactly is the Holocaust in contemporary German memory? The term Holocaust is one of the most intensely contested terms in recent history. Having roots in the Greek word Holokauston, meaning a completely burnt sacrificial offering,¹ most know the Holocaust specifically as the genocide of more than 6 million people classified as Jews by the Nazi regime.² The Nazis, however, persecuted and murdered millions of other people whom they did not classify as Jewish under their racial theories, including Sinti and Roma gypsies, Poles, Slavs, homosexuals, the disabled and elderly, Communists and Social Democrats. For a variety of reasons, discussion, literature and thought about the Holocaust typically does not include the senseless murder of these groups of people. Even the name of the German national Holocaust memorial, Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas (DEJE), reflected the view that the term should apply primarily to the Jews, the reasons for which are the subject of this chapter.

In the debate over the national Holocaust memorial, no question plagued the participants more nor evoked so much emotion as this: which groups of victims was this

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² When the Nazi’s officially installed their racial policies in the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, they defined a Jew as anyone who had more than three grandparents without Christian baptismal certificates. Because the Nazis believed “Jewishness” to be a racial characteristic that could be genetically inherited, it did not matter whether those classified as “Jews” considered themselves to be Jewish, practiced Judaism or even if they themselves had a Christian baptismal certificate. I will discuss this more below; Richard Evans, The Third Reich in Power (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2005), 545.
central memorial going to remember? Many participants in the debate noted the real
questions that lay behind this discussion were: “to whom does the Holocaust belong?”
and ultimately, how do Germans define the Holocaust? There were calls to spend time
clarifying who “the Nazis and their victims” were, the discussion of which deepened the
debate and enriched its historical importance. In the debate over the national Holocaust
memorial in Germany, these questions were initially in terms of including or excluding
Sinti and Roma in the dedication of the central memorial.

By examining the development of the debate over this issue, the two main
opposing sides became immediately clear. Television personality Lea Rosh and historian
Eberhard Jäckel, founders of the movement to create a central memorial for the
Holocaust, intended this memorial to remember the Jewish victims specifically. They
received support from other notable public figures such as historian Joachim Braun, CEO
of Daimler-Benz Edzard Reuter, former Bundeskanzler Willy Brandt and author Christa
Wolf, among others. The opposition led by Romani Rose, Chairman of the Central
Council of the German Sinti and Roma (ZSR), promoted the position that the memorial
should not be exclusively for the Jews, and he received a great deal of editorial support
for the claim. The fight to include the Sinti and Roma victims, or even all victims, of the
Nazis in the memorial was supported most notably by Kultursenator Ulrich Roloff-

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5 Zentralrat der deutschen Sinti und Roma: a civil rights organization for protecting Sinti and Roma in Germany founded in 1982 and based in Heidelberg. At its founding in 1982, Romani Rose (born: 1946) was elected Chairman. Having had 13 direct relatives murdered by the Nazis, Rose was a staunch advocate for Sinti and Roma rights and actively sought to protect his people from racism and discrimination.
6 Senator for Cultural Affairs: this is a position in the Berlin Senate usually filled by the Mayor of Berlin, at the time Eberhard Diepgen, to oversee matters of culture and art in Berlin.
Momin, Professor Reinhard Rürup, director of the Topography of Terror exhibit, and Heriburt Heuss of the Documentation and Cultural Center of the German Sinti and Roma.\(^7\)

Before approaching the issues illuminated by the debate over whom the national Holocaust memorial should represent, a brief chronology of this argument is essential. Discussion about this subject began to appear significantly in printed media during April 1989, not long after Lea Rosh initially proposed a central Holocaust memorial. At this time, both the positions of Romani Rose and of those who argued for a uniquely Jewish memorial appeared unwilling to make comprises to their positions.\(^8\) As the opposition hardened towards dedicating the central memorial to the Jewish victims alone, calls for increased discussion before the government made any final decisions resulted in debates about the victim groups.\(^9\) In late 1991 and early 1992, foreseeing that compromise was no longer a possibility,\(^10\) many journalists and editorial writers suggested that a design competition decide for whom and how the memorial would be constructed.\(^11\) The argument then began to spiral out of control, moving from a historical debate over the Holocaust to accusations of racism on the part of those who wanted the memorial exclusively for the Jews.\(^12\) Simultaneously, Romani Rose rejected Roloff-Momin’s offer

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\(^7\) Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum deutscher Sinti und Roma


to use government funds to build a second memorial for the Sinti and Roma, similar to the memorial for the Jews.\footnote{Anon., “Der getilte Holocaust: ein Denkmal-Streit,” \textit{Die Tageszeitung} (7/8/1992), 98.}

In mid-1992, Rose began to reach out to Heinz Galinski, retiring two-time Chairman of the \textit{Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (ZJD)}, which had become instrumental in the discussion of the preceding years, hoping to find a solution.\footnote{\textit{Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland}} The \textit{ZJD}, however, reaffirmed that it would not consider involving Sinti and Roma sufferings in the Jewish memorial.\footnote{Ute Frings, “Nationales Holocaust- Denkmal – für wen? ,” \textit{Frankfurter Rundschau} (7/10/1992), 99.} Finally, in October 1992, the debate seemed to come to an end when the Berlin \textit{Kultursenator} Roloff-Momin declared officially that the memorial would be only for the Jews and that the government would support the building of a similar memorial for the Sinti and Roma nearby.\footnote{Ulrich Roloff-Momin (\textit{KulturSenator}) to Dr. Joachim Braun (\textit{FEDJE}), 20 November 1992, 109.} While this initially increased discussion over the object of the memorial, eventually it gave way to a new topic of debate: whether this memorial, though dedicated to the Jews, was actually more for the German nation as a whole.

While the chronological context of this debate is essential to understand, the fundamental thematic issues that constituted each side of the debate are the focus of this chapter and I will therefore not be paying strict attention to chronology. When the \textit{Förderkreis Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europes (FEDJE)} was created in 1989, and even when Lea Rosh first proposed the idea for a national Holocaust memorial, the idea behind it had always been to remember the genocide of the Jews. Initially the reasons for dedicating the memorial to the Jews seemed clear. After all, who would question such an effort? Over time, however, provocation from the \textit{ZSR} increasingly
required that the *FEDJE* justify its decision to make the memorial for the Jews alone. Out of this, two arguments for an exclusively Jewish memorial developed: the centrality of anti-Semitism to National Socialism and the singularity of the persecution of the Jews. In the next section I will examine how the leaders of the *FEDJE* justified both building the memorial and its dedication to the Jewish victims along with these arguments of Jewish centrality to Nazi policies and the singularity of their persecution.

**Jews as Central and Singular Victims**

In order to discuss the centrality and singularity of Jews as victims, it is essential to understand how Jews came to be victims in the first place through Nazi racial thought in general and then its special meaning for the Jews. Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* first published in 1925 initially established policies that were later enforced in both word and deed by Nazi officials. The Nazis viewed race as an end: the ultimate goal being complete racial purity and the domination of the Aryan race.\(^{17}\) The Nazi concept of race itself was based on a pseudo-scientific concept of genetics and physical traits. Because race could be identified “scientifically,” strong qualities could be developed, while weak ones could be eliminated.\(^{18}\) But as long as the weak qualities continued to exist, they “polluted” the pure race and risked destroying it. Hitler said, “the lost purity of blood alone destroys inner happiness forever” of both an individual and a nation.\(^{19}\) Thus, Nazi racial policy focused on two goals: the promotion of the good Aryan characteristics and the elimination of the tainted characteristics.

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While there were many groups of people that ultimately had tainted characteristics according to the Nazis, only the Jews were targeted from the beginning in *Mein Kampf*. Hitler considered the Jews to be an “unclean,” “mixed” race with non-Aryan physical characteristics but who tried to live among the Aryan cultures just the same. Because, he said, “the Jew lacks those qualities which distinguish the races that are creative and hence culturally blessed,” as the Aryan races indelibly were, Jews living among Aryans were “parasites” feeding off of Aryan society and contributing nothing positive in return. In addition to this, Hitler believed that “the Jew has always been a people with definite racial characteristics and never a religion.” Thus, converting Jews to Protestantism could not teach them the sought-after qualities nor eliminate their supposed inherent and tainted racial characteristics. The Nazis believed that the mere existence of the Jews among Aryan society polluted the Aryans and put them at risk for failure as a people.

Nazi racial thought, however, did not stop at saying that the Jews were a passive threat to the Germany Aryan society. Rather, Nazis also insisted that Jews were *actively* trying to bring down Germany. In the wake of the First World War and the humiliations of the Versailles Treaty, the Nazi party needed a scapegoat to explain why the Germans had lost and the Jews were the perfect victims. Jews were a perpetual minority in every country and could easily be turned into an internal enemy without negatively affecting or alienating the majority. Thus, the Nazis portrayed the Jews as the backstabbers who lost Germany the war; thus, the Nazi party was going to save Germany not only from the

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21 Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 305.
horrible post-war conditions, but also from the Jewish threat. Further, the Nazis capitalized on the visible Jewish presence in banking and consumer industries by arguing that via these industries the Jews were trying to ruin the economy. At the same time, the Nazis illogically associated Jews with Bolshevism, terrifying the public who feared an expansion of Communism from Russia, and fueling the notion that Jews were subversive. Hitler and the Nazis utilized any and every presence of the Jews in German society against them. They did this for the dual purpose of promoting the Aryan race and the Nazis and eliminating those who were apparently trying to “destroy” German society: the Jews.

As a result, Nazi policy dictated that all Jews had to be removed from Germany and contact with the Aryan race. It seems pertinent to mention here that precisely what removal meant was up for debate. American political scientist Daniel Goldhagen wrote an extremely controversial book entitled *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* in 1996 that dealt, in part, with this subject. Goldhagen’s argument was that the German and Nazi forms of anti-Semitism were always “eliminationist” in nature and further that “the eliminationist mind-set tended towards an exterminationist one.” In other words, Goldhagen argued that inherent to German national identity throughout history was the mindset of wanting to eradicate all of the Jews, an intent that came close to fruition during the Nazi years. Many, however, do not accept Goldhagen’s point of view because of Nazi ideas like the Madagascar Plan, which sought to round up all the Jews and ship them to Madagascar.

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23 Evans, *in Power*, 574.
was certainly still an eliminationist plan, but at the very least it would have been better than the Holocaust that resulted.\textsuperscript{27}

With an understanding of the National Socialists racial policies and how they applied to the Jews in particular, it is now possible to discuss Jewish persecution in terms of who the Holocaust memorial should remember. The first argument raised by supporters of an exclusively Jewish memorial was that persecution of Jews played a central role in the National Socialist regime. Both the public and professional participants in the discussion used historical events to support this claim. Most frequently cited was the Wansee Conference of January 1942, a meeting between the leaders of the Nazi party to decide the fate of the Jews. The discussion at this conference centered on the “\textit{die Endlösung}” (the Final Solution) for the so-called “\textit{Judenfrage}” (Jewish Question).\textsuperscript{28} Essentially, it was a warrant for the genocide of all Jews living in German territories. Other editorials and articles invoked the boycott of Jewish businesses in 1933, the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 that deprived Jews of \textit{Reich} citizenship among other rights, or \textit{Kristallnacht} (Night of Broken Glass), a state-sponsored pogrom in 1938, during which the \textit{Sturmabteilung} (Nazi paramilitary) destroyed synagogues, Jewish businesses, homes and property.\textsuperscript{29} The purpose of calling up these historical events was to show how codified, planned, intentional and ultimately how essential the persecution of the Jews was to furthering National Socialist ideals.

\textsuperscript{27} Christopher R. Browning, \textit{The Origins of the Final Solution} (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 81-2.
\textsuperscript{29} Heinz Galinski (ZDJ) to Romani Rose (ZSR), 22 June, 1992, 93.
Supporters of an exclusively Jewish memorial also argued that Jewish persecution was unique. While the argument that the persecution of Jews was central to the Nazi regime gave credence to the idea of remembering Jewish victims, it was the argument that the persecution of the Jews was singular that provided the primary justification for a memorial to the Jews alone. This perspective often appeared through comments that suggested the breadth and intention behind the Nazi persecution of the Jews was “not applicable for the gypsies.”

Supporters of the FEDJE like Ignatz Bubis, deputy-Chairman and later Chairman of the ZJD for the majority of the Denkmalstreit, argued that, while it was true that the Sinti and Roma were victims of Nazi persecution, the Jews were “exemplary victims” and thus had their own history and sorrows to remember.

One of the most compelling but controversial arguments, proposed by the historian Eberhard Jäckel, was that the Holocaust was the “highpoint of centuries of anti-Semitism” and that no such ceaseless persecution of the Gypsies existed. Occasionally, even the fact that more than twice as many Jews were killed, some six million, than any other group was used to support the singularity of Jewish persecution. The root of this argument, however, was the fact that the Nazis intended to eliminate the Jews from the face of the Earth, without question or second thought. This was not extensive persecution as occurred to other victim groups; it was genocide.

34 To this point, Ute Frings made the controversial statement that “die Ausrottung der Zigeuner nicht geplant gewesen sei” (the extermination of the gypsies was not planned). Ute Frings, “Nationales
“Eine fatalische Heirarchisierung”

The alternative side in this discussion, led by the Sinti and Roma, called for a single memorial to all victims, as opposed to an exclusively Jewish memorial. Eager to prevent the public from forgetting the sufferings of his people, Romani Rose continually emphasized that the Sinti, Roma and Jews shared an existential commonality as victims of the Nazis.\(^{35}\) Other supporters stated that the sufferings of all victim groups, no matter how many of that group were murdered, were the same and should thus be remembered together, an argument which I discuss later.\(^{36}\) Perhaps the most important argument in favor of a memorial to all victims was that a memorial to the Jews alone would in some sense replicate Hitler’s singling out of particular groups of people. Honoring one group centrally and with a great deal of public attention would create a hierarchy of victims that valued or paid tribute to the sufferings of one group to a greater degree than others. Even if the government built memorials for the other victim groups, it would “awaken an impression of a hierarchy of victims” as the central, national Holocaust memorial would inevitably be more prominent or more frequently visited.\(^{37}\)

The discussion developed as people argued that different memorials would not just create an inequality in the number of visitors to the memorials, but that the different


memorials would create a permanent, physical, symbolic division between the victims. Because all victims were persecuted in the same manner, they argued that there should be no “split between the victims of genocide” in the way that they were publicly remembered.\(^{38}\) Thus if the memorial ultimately created this permanent physical and theoretical split in national memory, it would simultaneously create a concrete class system of victims on the inverse racial basis of the Nazis. To many, this perceived racial injustice would be a failure on many levels, due to its physical permanence and the widespread perception of its legitimacy as a result of government and popular support both within and outside of Germany.\(^{39}\) Ultimately, many condemned the building of a memorial that remembered the Holocaust but excluded some groups of victims as a “one-sided, historically false initiative” because of its inherent contradictions.\(^{40}\) In other words, those who defined the Holocaust by the totality of victims saw a central, national Holocaust memorial that was dedicated only to the Jewish victims as an historical misrepresentation.

Of all of the arguments in the debate over whom to remember in the central Holocaust memorial, this argument about hierarchy generated the most emotion. The charged language and unusually strong implications of some editorial statements betrayed this emotion and showed that there would be no historical objectivity in dealing with this question. Romani Rose stated that proponents of the memorial must “make the

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confession of the historical guilt and special responsibility of the Germans pertain to the
Sinti and Roma as well as the Jews.” In other words, Rose viewed the memorial as
Germany admitting to their guilt for the murder of Jews, and by not including the Sinti
and Roma, Rose thought the Germans were refusing to admit their guilt for their crimes
against his people. It is clear from this statement that the meaning of the memorial had
moved beyond an expression of remembrance to an admission of German national guilt.
Clearly, the Sinti and Roma felt excluded from the German nation’s apology for its
crimes by not being included in this memorial. As historian Anita Kugler bitterly said
after the decision had been made in favor of an exclusively Jewish memorial, “the end of
the debate is here: no memorial for the Sinti and Roma . . . because gypsies have no
lobby even among their fellow sufferers.” Thus, for the Sinti and Roma, the debate
about the memorial came to be about their own sense of victimhood and struggle to have
the crimes against them remembered. As the liberal-center Berliner Zeitung said in 1992,
“the Central Committee of Sinti and Roma continues to hope . . . the murdered Sinti and
Roma will be remembered.”

While, for all intents and purposes, the Jews were receiving the first memorial for
an individual group of victims and they were receiving primary public attention, the
supporters of an exclusively Jewish memorial did not see it as creating a hierarchy.
Eberhard Jäckel’s response to the criticisms of hierarchy was to say that the accusations
were “not right. The victims stand for themselves . . . What we are ordering is the

41 “der Bekenntnis zur historischen Schuld und zur besonderen Verantwortung Deutschlands gegenüber
den Juden wie gegenüber Sinti und Roma zu setzen vermag.” Romani Rose (ZSR) to Dr. Joachim Braun
(FEDJE), Heidelberg 8 March 1991, 73.
42 “Denn Zigeuner haben keine Lobby, nicht einmal unter den ehemaligen Leidensgenossen.” Anita Kugler,
43 “Der Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma hofft weiter auf ein Nationales Holocaust-Denkmal in Berlin,
mit dem auch an die von den Nationalsozialisten ermordeten Sinti und Roma erinnert wird.” Anon., “Sinti
process.” More brashly, Lea Rosh responded that the goal of the Sinti and Roma was simply to inhibit the building of a Jewish memorial and defame those who supported it as racists. It is important to note, however, that it was not the government that had initiated this memorial, but a private group. Therefore, even though the Jewish memorial was the first to receive government funding, it was more because no Sinti and Roma memorial had been proposed than because such a memorial was unwanted or, quite clearly, because it went without public or governmental support.

**Different Memorials for Different Histories**

*Der Tagesspiegel,* a liberal Berlin daily, printed an article that exhibited a second argument against an exclusively Jewish memorial: that “on this spot of terror for all peoples, it would be wrong to remember just the Jews.” Statements like this raised two interesting and related points: first, the issue of the memorial’s location and second, the issue of collective memory. The issue of location raised the question of how the memorial should relate to the history of Berlin and of Germany by its physical position. In 1992, the *Berliner Senat* approved the location of the grounds of the former *Reichskanzlei* (Reich Chancellery) as the memorial’s location. Hitler had lived and worked in this building while in Berlin and the same area of land later held the bunker in which Hitler died. Based on the assumption that the Jewish persecution was central and singular in the history of the Third Reich, this was the place where the fate of the Jews was decided and, according to Eberhard Jäckel, thus belonged to the Jewish victims as a

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46 As my introduction and an earlier section in this chapter stated, in October 1992, the *Berliner Senat* and agreed to build a memorial for the Sinti and Roma.
place of memory. Jakob Schulze-Rohr, one of the original members of Perspektive Berlin, also argued that because the Nazis persecuted the Jews both in Germany and in all the lands conquered by the Third Reich, while other victims had particular places of persecution, there was no such place for the Jews. It seems to me that a memorial to the Jews alone in the place from which the persecution stemmed was justifiable.

Here I will look more closely at this second component of communality. The FEDJE and its supporters argued that to have one memorial for all victims would mean that the essential differences in means of and reasons for persecution would not be recognized and the victims would forever be an enormous, undifferentiated collective. Although people like Heinz Galinski, former president of the ZJD, recognized that all victims shared an “existential commonality,” FEDJE and its supporters argued that “other victim groups have their specific history of sorrows and thus require their own memories.” To me it seems clear that a memorial combining Jewish and, say, homosexual victims attempts to memorialize two radically different social issues: racism and homophobia.

From its inception, the proponents of a Jewish memorial declared that it would be “senseless” to have a communal memorial because persecution of the Jews was the greatest both numerically and in singularity to the Nazi regime, as discussed earlier. In turn, a more refined argument developed that said that a memorial to all of the Third

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Reich victims would not be specific enough to produce any real form of remembrance. An article in the politically centrist *Die Zeit* went so far as to say that it would be corrupt for the *FEDJE* to support a memorial for all victims because it would undermine the organization’s founding principal: the commemoration of the Jewish Holocaust victims. Clearly, many believed existing memorials, such as *Steinplatz*, where in 1953 the government had erected a simple monument reading “1933-1945, To the Victims of National Socialism,” to be sufficient central, universal memorials. They were adamant that a memorial for the Jews “must not be confused with a central memorial for all victims.”

The argument for an exclusively Jewish memorial came down to the fundamental issue of what Eberhard Jäckel called “different and differentiated historical images.” As discussed earlier, the Nazis persecuted Jews for different reasons and to a different extent than other victim groups. This is a distinction that some other victim groups freely admitted. For example, Andrzej Szczypiorski, a Pole who took part in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and was later imprisoned in Sachsenhausen *Konzentrationslager* (concentration camp, *KZ*) just outside of Berlin, wrote that “a difference freely existed. As a Pole, I was not convicted automatically. I had to do something in order to enter the persecution

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machinery.” In this statement, Szczypiorski illustrated the difference between Jewish persecution and the next largest group of victims, the Poles: the Nazis imprisoned and killed Jews simply because they existed. In other words, the persecution of the Jews was qualitatively different than the persecution of other groups. To illustrate the near absurdity of the question whether or not it was appropriate to have a memorial just for the Jews, Eberhard Jäckel made the following comparison:

I know of no objection against the Vietnam-memorial in Washington that it must memorialize both the Vietnamese and South-Asian victims. I also know of no objections against the Schiller monument, that it must at the same time also memorialize Goethe or even all poets.

He went on to say that this did or had not happened because each of those instances commemorated different historical events, implying that this was the case for the Jewish persecution and therefore there should be an exclusively Jewish memorial as well.

Those in favor of a single memorial argued, however, that in the context of history, memory of the Jewish persecution could not be isolated in that way from the memory of the persecution of other victim groups. A German memorial to the Jews alone would not represent the “complexity of history,” because the Holocaust was so much more than just the Jewish genocide. Some went further, saying that not only did a Jewish memorial not portray history’s intricacies, but that it would actually have “wide-

reaching consequences for the understanding of National Socialist times.\textsuperscript{60} Because the memorial would simply honor the memory of the murdered Jews, it would fail to account for the relationships of those Jews to other heritages, to other victim groups, and would therefore detach the Holocaust and Nazi persecution from other victim groups. Because memorials were physical constructions that made statements about how a nation or group of people remembered its past, to ensure that memorials presented the past appropriately and completely was essential. In effect, this argument was that a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe would be a false and incomplete history of the Holocaust and Nazi times.

**The End of the Memorial for All Victims**

The result of such discussion was that many continued to argue that the memorial really “must be dedicated to all victims of National Socialist terror”\textsuperscript{61} and that it must be a “unified memorial for the persecuted.”\textsuperscript{62} In order to make a final effort to have their point heard and taken into account, people like German historian Dr. Reinhart Koselleck presented two arguments for the inclusion of all victim groups in the Holocaust memorial. First, because the initiators intended this memorial to be the central, national Holocaust memorial, it had to be inclusive. If the memorial was to represent the nation, it had to be the whole nation and not certain segments. Second, that “as a nation that organized this genocide” Germany could not pick and choose which victims it wanted to remember in the memorial, particularly because this was to be a national memorial.


located in the new capital of Berlin. Germany was culpable, it was therefore the Germans’ “duty to remember everyone” whom they had wronged.

By this time in the debate, however, it was clear that a single, unified memorial would not satisfy the organizations that had influence in the decision: at the very least the Jewish community, the FEDJE and the Bundestag. In October 1992, the Berliner Senat voted that the proposed Holocaust memorial would be for the Jews alone. Simultaneously, however, the Senat assured its support for the building of a Sinti and Roma memorial in the same location. While this was the decision sought by the FEDJE and thus satisfied many, it did little to appease the Sinti and Roma and the many other proponents of a universal memorial. Bitter remarks continued to surface through the first competition for a memorial design. It seemed to some that questions about how there could be “existential communality but no communal memorial” would go unanswered.

But as Peter Conradi, MdB-SPD (Member of the German Bundestag, Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) and architect, reiterated in 1996, the Germans “should not take on the discussion over a universal memorial” because “this question is decided.”

By the eve of the second design competition, calls for a universal memorial had definitely subsided considerably from the earlier intense debate, although many of the concerns that had prompted the desire for a universal memorial remained. In 1997, as the

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65 Ulrich Roloff-Momin (KulturSenator) to Dr. Joachim Braun (FEDJE), 20 November 1992, 109.
FEDJE and Bundesregierung held open forums about how to proceed with the memorial discussion, three important and influential voices in both the Denkmalstreit published articles that both upheld and furthered the statements already made by the government. American political scientist Daniel Goldhagen stated that while there should not be an hierarchical ordering of victims in public memory, “no victim group should be offended that another will be remembered.”68 The German history Professor Christian Meier went further, saying that “one such memorial for all victims of persecution politics can only be built if no one with good reasons protests against it.”69 As I noted earlier, Ignatiz Bubis and the Jewish community had opposed a memorial for all victims in favor of a memorial to Jewish persecution alone. According to Meier, this should be enough protest to make a collective memorial impossible because all parties memorialized must do so willingly for the memorial to be legitimate. Finally, Salomon Korn, respected German architect and a leader of the German Jewish community, asked that the public “respect that Jews do not want to be remembered in the same memorial as others.”70

Most importantly, the FEDJE argued strongly that the proponents of a Jewish memorial were “not against other victim groups, but for one.”71 They made it clear that they wanted a Jewish memorial, but that this did not mean they objected to a Sinti and Roma memorial. It is therefore not surprising that the FEDJE and those who supported

them also advocated building memorials for all victims groups. While a seemingly appropriate compromise, many rejected it. In a country already full of symbolic locations and memorials, some felt that so many different memorials next to each other would be excessive and cause each individual memorial to lose meaning. Finally, while a memorial to all victims would incur “no forced feeling for the Jews” or any other individual victim group, visitors to unique memorials would be compelled to feel emotions. This really had to do with the centrality of the memorial’s location in Berlin – in the city center, in which people walk and work everyday – where they would now have to see the DEJE whether they chose to or not.

A sign that the public and even dissenting members of Parliament were finally willing to accept the exclusively Jewish memorial were the demands that began to appear regarding memorials for the other victim groups. Volker Beck, MdB (Die Grünen) and GP Speaker for Legal Affairs, admitted that the Jewish genocide was a unique event in German history but said that “the other victims of National Socialism must be thought of worthily and appropriately.” Having previously criticized the idea of a uniquely Jewish memorial, Dr. Koselleck stated that if there were to be a uniquely Jewish memorial, than the Bundestag’s “word stands for all other victim groups, who were extinguished by us, to also receive memorials.”

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also acknowledged the claims of the other victim groups to their own memorials and also to “reasonable locations” for those memorials.\textsuperscript{76} She thus ensured that the Bundestag would have to implement some measure of quality control in building those future memorials. She demanded that the Government and nation not simply push aside the public memory of these other persecuted groups, as many feared. Even after the conclusion of the second design competition, when energy to build the memorial really waned, these mandates were strong. German historian and director of the Topography of Terror exhibit Reinhard Rürup most clearly stated this lasting imperative when he said “the decision for a memorial for one victim group necessitates a decision for further memorials for other victim groups.”\textsuperscript{77} Such statements would not have been possible without some amount of established consensus for a memorial only to the murdered Jews of Europe.

Despite this acceptance, there were still many who remained skeptical of the plan to build a Jewish Holocaust memorial. Concerns about the effect on history of restricting public memory of the Holocaust to strictly the Jewish victims remained strong through the end of the second design competition in late 1997. In particular, the idea that the way in which this memorial represented the Holocaust would have “wide-reaching consequences for the understanding of National-Socialist times” and the implication that this understanding would be confused by the present form of the memorial was troubling.\textsuperscript{78} Because the memorial was to be the first national statement on Holocaust

\textsuperscript{76}“Auch sie brauchen angemessene Standorte.” Rita Süssmuth, Bundespräsidentin, “Ansprache,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (2/14/1997), 661.
history in a reunified nation, there was great concern that the statement be correct and generally concurred upon. In a completely different sense, the concern remained that after building this grand memorial to the Jews, the other victim groups would still be forgotten. The fear was not so much that the government would not build memorials. Parliament had made it clear that this would not be the case, but rather that their places of memory would pale in comparison to that allotted to the Jews. One journalist posed his skepticism, questioning whether there would not end up being “a representative super-memorial for the Jews, a small thing for the Sinti & Roma and a few shapely thought corners for all the others.”79 No amount of persuasion would ever answer this question; it was one which would only be answered through action.

**The Neue Wache as a Solution**

One possible answer to the question of a collective memorial, as some conservatives saw it, already existed in the form of the memorial located inside the *Neue Wache* (New Guardhouse). Built in 1813 on Berlin’s main street *Unter den Linden*, Friedrich Wilhelm III used the *Neue Wache*, appropriately, as the guardhouse for his troops. Since then, it has been rededicated three times: first in 1918 as the “Memorial to the Fallen of the War,” second in 1960 by the DDR as the “Memorial to the Victims of Militarism and Fascism,” and third in 1993 as the “Central Memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany for the Victims of War and Tyranny.” The 1993 memorial consisted of a *Pieta* sculpture by Käthe Kollwitz, at which visitors could look and reflect. Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) was an internationally renowned German artist and sculptor.

in the period prior to and during the Nazi regime, known particularly for her depiction of victims of injustice.

Because of the Neue Wache’s generic inscription and the breadth of people, groups and cultures it could include, a right-center coalition considered it to be comprehensive and therefore satisfactory as a memorial to all victims. Architect Salomon Korn suggested that because the Neue Wache represented the victims of genocide in totality, it was safe to agree to memorials for individual victim groups. His argument was that the Neue Wache, in memorializing a concept, also implicitly memorialized the complexities of history that many said would be missing by having individual memorials. Thus, this Neue Wache was appropriate as the memorial to all victims.

Nevertheless, many others deemed the Neue Wache to be largely insufficient as a memorial to all genocide victims, especially victims of Nazi policies. Proving social historian Professor Jürgen Kocka’s point that “every victim definition implies new exclusions and conflicts,” Dr. Reinhart Koselleck argued that the symbolic Pieta statue that acted as the centerpiece of the memorial excluded two groups of people. As such, he argued that because these victim groups were not included in the mourning represented by the Neue Wache, it was not in fact appropriate for all victims. As a place “where parents can meditate for their lost sons,” one significant exclusion, particularly in terms of the Holocaust, was women who were murdered. As Dr. Koselleck argued, genocide and the Holocaust did not touch only males, and the Neue Wache was therefore inadequate for half of the Holocaust victims. The second group of victims left out in the

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Neue Wache was the Jews. Even though Käthe Kollwitz intended her Pieta to be a generic mother and son for all races and cultures, the Pieta itself is a traditional symbol of Christianity. Thus, Jews could not really be a part of the memory expressed by the Neue Wache.

Those who criticized the view of the Neue Wache’s Pieta as an adequate memorial for all victims of the Holocaust also did so because the memorial could be taken to show Germans as victims. The thought that the mourning mother and dead son had the potential to represent Germans, particularly German soldiers, implied the memorial also portrayed the Germans themselves as sufferers. As far as remembering the Holocaust was concerned, the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung saw the Neue Wache as unacceptable because Holocaust memorials should represent Germans as “the survivors of the criminals, not the victims.” Some like Dr. Burkhard Hirsch, Bundestages Vizepräsident-FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei), suggested that there was actually a larger trend when he stated that as Germans “we have made ourselves into perpetrators and victims.” Hirsch here referred to the trend of discussion in Germany that increasingly spoke of the German casualties in the fire-bombings of cities like Dresden as victims of the war.

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85 Discussion about the fire-bombings of German cities began only recently among German historians, one of the earliest pieces being an essay by W.G. Sebald entitled “A History of Natural Destruction” published in The New Yorker’s November 4, 2002 issue. Before this, discussion of the fire-bombings was largely dormant in German historiography out of fear that Germans would be seen by the world as thinking of themselves as victims rather than focusing on their role as perpetrators. For a review of the issue of fire-bombings in German historical literature, see: Dagmar Barnouw, “Review of Joerg Friedrich’s The Fire: The Bombing of Germany 1940-1945,” History News Network, 16 March 2007, http://hnn.us/roundup/comments/36613.html (Accessed on 28 April 2008). For more recent historical literature on the subject, see: Alexander McKee, Dresden 1945: The Devil's Tinderbox (London: Souvenir
In terms of German memory politics, the slightest implication of German victimhood was still generally unacceptable to liberals, particularly to those who supported the central Holocaust memorial. Germans had not made the appropriate reconciliation with their past to begin thinking of themselves as victims. As Professor of Art History Dr. Katrin Hoffman-Curtius stated, they were “not entitled to an identification with the victims.” At least not yet. The ability to identify with the victims of Nazism or even worse, as a non-persecuted German to consider oneself to have been a victim of Nazism simply because it existed in the nation, was, as Professor Christian Meier said, morally wrong “and even shameful.” People like German author and Jewish spokesman Richard Chaim Schneider described this trend as an attempt to “somehow get rid of their burdened heritage” by considering oneself also to have been a victim.

Supporters of the new, central Holocaust memorial wanted to keep it from falling into the same pattern of criticism that the Neue Wache had. No matter what, they said, this Holocaust memorial could not suggest that the non-Jewish, non-victimized Germans were capable of empathizing with those whom the Nazis had persecuted. The reason being, that if Germans could empathize with the victims, then on some level the Germans would consider themselves to have suffered equally. In this new memorial, as Professor

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89 Here I intend to contrast empathy, understanding through like-experience, with sympathy, sensitivity to another’s experiences. I will utilize this distinction throughout the rest of the chapter.
Christian Meier stated, “the collective of victims in the Neue Wache must definitely be dissolved.”

**Shifting the Discussion: Victim Memory or Perpetrator Memory**

This debate over the depiction of victims and culprits in the Neue Wache represented a shift in discussion over for whom the memorial should be built after the conclusion of the first design competition. There were always people who continued to support a single memorial for all victims throughout the entirety of the debate. However, the focus of the “for whom” debate shifted from one of Jews versus Sinti and Roma and later all victim groups, to one of memory of the victims versus memory of the German nation, the perpetrators. As was emphasized so often throughout the course of the debate, the public and government had to consider this question so carefully because in Germany both the perpetrators and victims of Nazi times were still present, if in decreasing numbers. Gradually through the debate, the participants recognized that there was a new generation to confront these problems: the descendents of survivors and those of victims, who no longer necessarily had a direct connection to their relatives who had lived in the Third Reich.

The participants began to see that there would always be a dialectic between the descendents of survivors and those of victims, because those two different perspectives would always remember the events differently. As Thomas Lackmann, editor of the liberal Berlin daily *Die Tagesspiegel* and a leading member of the German Jewish

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91 Note: For most part the “victims” I discuss in the perpetrator versus victim debate are the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Because this discussion took place largely after 1996 as debate participants had accepted the exclusively Jewish memorial to a greater degree, when discussing the victims to be memorialized in the Holocaust memorial after that point, we can assume that they were the Jewish victims.
community said, “a memorial cannot function without this dissent” between the two versions of memory.\textsuperscript{92} Throughout most of German history, Germans had been either the victims or perpetrators, but not both. Therefore, the nation could easily define national memory of the event because there was a natural “abyss between them and us, between victims and their descendents on one side and murderers and their descendents on the other,” as stated in the liberal-center national weekly journal \textit{Der Spiegel}.\textsuperscript{93} This fundamental issue of defining who was guilty and who needed to be remembered, had not needed to be considered until the unique event of the Holocaust arose.

In Germany however, where the victims were in some cases Germans themselves, the question of victim and perpetrator became more complicated and required the German public to cope with that complexity. What remained to be decided was precisely where the line between perpetrators and victims in the public memory of the Holocaust would fall. As we saw with the \textit{Neue Wache}, the issue of how much the German nation should be able to identify with the victims defined this issue. Professor of Theology and Philosophy Richard Schröder elucidated this problem when he said, “sympathy for the victims is admittedly displayed, however, the empathy can be tactless, if it does not distinguish between me and you,” the victim and the perpetrator.\textsuperscript{94} In the rest of this chapter I will examine this problem, looking at the language that established the \textit{DEJE}’s balance between representing the perpetrators and victims.

\textsuperscript{94} “Mitgefühl mit den Opfern ist allerdings angezeigt, aber auch die Empathie kann taktlos werden, wenn sie nicht zwischen mien und dein unterscheidet.” Richard Schröder, “So Nicht!,” \textit{Die Zeit} (1/21/1999), 1209.
The Victim-Centric Perspective

Lea Rosh and Eberhard Jäckel originally conceived a memorial to represent the victims of the Holocaust and were therefore the leaders of what I call the Victim-Centric Perspective. Most people also seem to have envisioned the memorial in this way: “a memorial of the perpetrators for the victims,” as stated at the time in the liberal-center weekly paper, Die Weltwoche. Besides the need to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust, the idea behind a victim-centered memorial was that it was only through the victims that one could really remember the crimes as terrible acts without justification. The initiators founded the memorial on this perspective. After all, what is a memorial but an object that places an event or group of people in public memory? With that in mind, the Victim-Centric perspective said that Germany could not justify honoring the memory of Nazi times through any means other than the victims of their nation’s own crimes.

Those representing what I call the Unified Perspective, which I will discuss more later, found many problems with structuring the memorial as strictly from the perpetrators for the victims. Professor Richard Schröder in particular spearheaded the skeptical perspective of a victim-centric memorial. Because such a memorial in a country of both culprits and victims failed to speak to both perspectives, that memorial would “redeem no one.” It would simply exist and be unable to establish a productive dialectic of reconciliation between the two groups of descendents. Of course, it is difficult to say that a memorial dedicated to the victims of such a tragic crime as the Holocaust was not a

96 Professor Heinz Bieter Kittsteiner, “Diskussion.” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (1/10/1997), 620.
meaningful or sought after gesture. Schröder said, however, “an exclusively victim-oriented memorial is well meaning, but not good.”

Another, perhaps even more fundamental, problem with a Victim-Centric Perspective was that mainly non-Jewish Germans thought of and carried out the process of building this memorial. Compared to non-Jewish Germans, the Jewish community played an otherwise passive role in building it. How could “a memorial built of the Germans in Germany” be a memorial for the European Jewish victims of the Holocaust? Dr. Reinhart Koselleck was adamant that “a Holocaust memorial is not possible without the legitimate cooperation of the Jews.” If this was not to be the case, the memorial was just as likely to turn out to be one representative only of German perpetrator-descendents’ interests because Jewish voices would not be present in the design discussion. Koselleck’s argument seems to follow the logic that a memorial without Jewish input would almost be an imposition of memory, a place where Jews would be told they could come to honor their dead in a way prescribed for them by non-Jews that might or might not really speak or mean anything to them. If this was to be the case, it did not seem that the Victim-Centric Perspective would be the consensus.

The Perpetrator-Centric Perspective

The opposing argument in this discussion was what I call the Perpetrator-Centric Perspective, which argued that the memorial should focus on the German nation and not the Jewish victims, or victims at all. Supporters of this perspective believed that the

memorial should really concern and speak to the descendents of the German perpetrators. Supporters of this view differed, however, about how strongly the memorial should present the Germans as criminals. As early as 1991, Günther Freudenberg, a professor of philosophy and politician, stated that the Holocaust memorial should not be for the Jews or the Sinti and Roma; rather “it should be a monument to the Germans who remember the Holocaust performed in their name.” As artist Horst Hoheisel said that the memorial “must reflect culprit-hood,” nevertheless, there was not much discussion of this perspective in the years after 1991.

The messages supporting the Perpetrator-Centric Perspective seem to have grown stronger in the debate that ensued after the first design competition ended in 1996. In trying to develop a new idea of what the memorial should represent, Political Scientist Professor Peter Reichel argued that Germans should “engage more with the dead culprits, the most unspectacular life history of the mass murderers and their helpers.” He saw the Victim-Centric Perspective supporters as attempting to create “self-righteous solidarism with the victims,” in other words, that that perspective encouraged an empathy with the victims that could not exist for the German nation. Such a memorial would not be productive in coming to terms with the Nazi crimes, particularly, as he noted, in the new capital of reunified Germany – Berlin.

This sounds similar to the argument made against the Neue Wache that trying to align the

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country as a whole too closely with the victims was inappropriate. By the dawn of the second competition, people like Jewish-German journalist and author Henryk Broder said that in Germany, “the land of the perpetrators, the perpetrators must at first and before all be spoken of.”106 By the time the Bundestag debated the final design for the memorial, the mandate of this perspective had a clear voice through Dr. Reinhart Koselleck: “our roll as murderers must be visualized here.”107

**Unified Perspective: For the Future**

The two winning designs of the first competition, one of which represented the victims’ perspective and the other, more the role of the perpetrators, prompted some to conclude that a memorial would be pointless unless it captured the entirety of the past.108 What I call the Unified Perspective said that the memorial must portray both victims and perpetrators in relation to one another, developed in response to the first design competition. Professor Christian Meier, one of the most outspoken advocates for a memorial that represented both victims and culprits, said that at a memorial to the crimes of the Holocaust located in Germany “one cannot think of the victims without remembering the perpetrators and our land as perpetrator” because the two thoughts are so intricately connected.109 Or as he later put it: with anything that “concerns the memory of the German past of NS times, we must put the perpetrators and victims in one.”110

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108 Andreas Krause, “Im Tode vereint, im Denkmal getrennt,” Berliner Zeitung (1/10/1997), 140.
In this view, because the audience for this memorial would be not only Jews but also “the Germans living today,” it could not be “just a memorial for the dead Jews.” In effect, from this perspective it would seem foolish to disregard the truth that non-Jewish Germans would make use of this memorial and thus their background and history as descendents of the culprits could not be ignored in its creation and design. Salomon Korn emphasized this when he said that in Germany there must “be a self-understanding above all, of the memory of the murderers and their victims” that could only come through a memorial that balanced those two perspectives. An anonymous article that appeared in Der Spiegel during the parliamentary discussion over the second competition summed up the switch to this balanced perspective through the tail end of the debate:

The murderers and their descendents support a monument for their victims, that was at the same time a mirror of murderer-shame: victim classification and stigma, place of sorrows, horror and shame in one, memory of the murderers and their victims at the same time.

It seemed likely that the chosen memorial design would in some way portray a balance that had meaning for the victims and the perpetrators simultaneously and equally.

The idea of designing the memorial for the future generations of both perpetrators and descendents extended this Unified Perspective. The development of a discourse about the future began to appear relatively late in the debate. Above all, the idea of building the memorial for the future generations was to name it as a preventative measure against the

nation forgetting “these crimes and to make sure the descendent generations can never repeat it.”

This idea that Auschwitz and the Holocaust must never be repeated was central to the memorial’s foundation, as was discussed more fully in Chapter I. Thus it made sense that the people for whom this memorial would be built must be those to whom its message would be addressed: the future generation. On a different level, the memorial had to be for the future of the nation as it “would stand in the federal capital of Berlin.”

As a newly unified nation, and in a sense a completely redefined nation, this memorial would define the physical and historical future of the nation’s new capital.

Though at different times, representatives of both perpetrators and victims came to agree that the Unified Perspective offered the best chance for success. As Polish Holocaust survivor Andrzej Szczypiorski stated, the memorial it was “for them, the not yet born . . . and in this sense it is a memorial for the victims and perpetrators. So that there are never again victims but also never again perpetrators.”

Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder, SPD, said that the memorial should be “a place of memory for those who cannot have memories for themselves,” that is, future generations who had no memory of the Nazi times themselves. Thus, victim and non-victim came to agree that the memorial should be built to achieve an equilibrium of memory, one that represented both victims and perpetrators by acting in the interest of future generations.

115 “Es gehe um ein Denkmal für die Zukunft, das in der Bundeshauptstadt Berlin stehen werde.” Dr. Christoph Stölz, “Diskussion,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (2/14/1997), 671.
Conclusion

This first stage of the argument over for whom the central Holocaust memorial should be built, either for all victims of National Socialism or for only the Jews, was an important discussion within the larger debate over German memory of the Holocaust. Working through this discussion forced some kind of public consensus and understanding about the Holocaust as an historical event, in other words, it answered the question “wem gehört der Holocaust.” In order to reach this conclusion, the argument required an analysis of victim groups and the reasons for which the Nazis had persecuted them. This discussion resulted in a differentiation of Holocaust victims, which included racial and political victims, from the many different types of victims of the National Socialist regime, which included the Holocaust victims but also young soldiers and resistance fighters. Memorials at Steinplatz and the newly constructed, equally controversial Neue Wache on Unter den Linden already memorialized this latter group of victims in Berlin.

By supporting the creation of memorials to each different group that the Nazis victimized, the government began to answer the question of how to define the Holocaust that had been posed early on in the debate. The government defined the Holocaust as the totality of the crimes committed against the racial and political victims of the Third Reich but recognized that the history and persecution of each victim group within the history of the Holocaust was unique. These were differences that required individual mourning and remembrance and thus individual memorials. However, this debate also brought agreement about the fact that the Nazi persecution of the Jews was unique; central to Nazi policies was the erasure of Jews from the earth, which was untrue of any

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other victim group. Openly discussing and identifying the victims of the Holocaust was essential to the formation of German national identity because it finally began to answer some of the issues raised during the Historikerstreit. By addressing how to define the Holocaust Germans were forced to reckon with the idea of the Jews’ singularity as a victim group and with the extent to which descendents of the perpetrators must still be aware of their ancestors’ actions. Through this discussion, the Holocaust was beginning to take on a more concrete meaning and understanding one with which the public could work.

The second stage of the argument over for whom to build Holocaust memorial dealt with a defining question of contemporary German national identity: understanding the relationship between the descendents of victims and descendents of perpetrators who were now members of the same national community. Focusing solely on the victims was inadequate because it ignored the role of the perpetrators and the bias of the perpetrators’ input on the memorial’s design. The memorial could also not center itself on the culprits, because this did nothing to promote understanding and reconciliation between and the descendents of the Nazis and the descendents of the victims. The answer was in finding a balance between representing victims and culprits and recognizing that the real group for whom this memorial should be built was future generations.

Having established the discussion over why and whether a national Holocaust memorial should be built raised the difficult question of to whom the memorial should be dedicated. Even though these discussions occurred simultaneously, the advantage of breaking down the Denkmalstreit by theme as opposed to chronologically has thus far revealed a consensus, albeit a limited one, on each important issue that the debate raised.
In Chapter I we saw that there would be a national Holocaust memorial that would help to establish a new German national identity. In this Chapter we have seen the Germans begin to decide what this national identity would be by defining the Holocaust as an historical event. What we are left with in the *Denkmalstreit* was the most practical of all discussions: the debate over the location and design of the memorial. The question: how do we go about putting the Holocaust in a concrete, physical form? This is the topic of discussion for Chapters III and IV.
Chapter III
Representing the Holocaust:
The First Design Competition

In the German language, there are three different terms used to refer to a memorial: *Denkmal, Mahnmal* and *Gedenkstätte*. While all three refer to a place of remembrance, each has a different nuance. A *Mahnmal*, for instance, conveys a message of warning while a *Gedenkstätte* usually refers to a preserved historical location. *Denkmal* is the most generic term used and therefore requires the most in terms of definition. When the *Förderkreises zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas (FEDJE)* decided to support the building of a national Holocaust memorial, they began with a completely blank slate. They had determined to dedicate this memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, but in terms of physical form and theoretical message, there were almost no guidelines.

When the Berlin Wall fell in November of 1989, it ended the artificial partition of Germany’s core, not simply politically, but physically. After more than 28 years, however, a complete generation of Germans had grown up disunited and the *Mauer-im-Kopf* (wall in the head) lasted far longer than the wall itself. In 1991, when the Federal Government moved from its Cold War location in Bonn back to its historical location in Berlin, it brought to the fore the issue of how to operate a unified country that had been physically divided for so long. The juxtaposition of architecture, clothing, religion, or lack thereof, and even language threw into sharp contrast Berlin-*Ost* and Berlin-*West*. How, then, was an event like the Holocaust that occurred in the united Germany of a former time, to be remembered in this reunified Germany whose people had been socialized so differently?
The implications of Berlin’s and Germany’s former division for the debate over the Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas were two-fold. First, a significant amount of thought had to go into deciding the location for the memorial. In any other country, location would not have played so big a role. But due to the recent past and the history of Germany and given the particular past the memorial was to remember, the memorial’s location was a key decision. Second, the memorial would have to take a form that allowed individuals from both the East and the West of the country and city to feel comfortable bringing their individual memories to it. It therefore could not embody a solely Eastern or Western perspective on the Holocaust. In this chapter and the next, I will examine both of these problems and their role in the overall debate about the national German Holocaust memorial.

Locating Holocaust Memory

Because of the historical timeframe in which the debate over the national Holocaust memorial took place, the Bund, Land and FEDJE put an intense focus on where the memorial would be located both within the Federal Republic of Germany and within Berlin itself. Supporters of the memorial felt that only a “nationally important place” was appropriate for preserving Holocaust and genocide memory, and that this place had to be equally important for both East and West Germany. In this regard, locating the memorial in Berlin meant putting it in both the capital of the united Germany and the place in which citizens had felt the division most acutely. In choosing Berlin as the symbolic location for the memorial, its proponents sought to make it clear that Germany had reunified, not just in terms of its politics, but also “in terms of its National

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Socialist locations.” The conservatives, and those in support of normalization during the Historikerstreit, raised the concern that, by setting this precedent, Berlin would “live only as a ‘mile of monuments.’” Conceivably, Berlin could become the only place in which the government could build nationally important memorials to give them a sense of symbolic importance in terms of a unified Germany. Discussion in the Reichstag and in editorials emphasized that all “must be observant so that German history will not be cleaned up at the cost of Berlin” and that this memorial “must not just be Berlin’s issue, but a national task.” By this they meant that they wanted to preserve Berlin as a city unto itself and not consign it to being a graveyard of history by filling it with memorials, keeping it from existing in the present. Thus, what I call the Normalizers, who wanted Germany to move beyond the past, expressed particular concern for this point of view as I have just described.

Having decided upon the memorial’s general location, the new capital of a reunited Germany, the issue of specifically where in Berlin it would be located came into question. Most Germans agreed, as one editorialist wrote, that the memorial “belongs in a place that no one can wipe away, that reflects German history.” In this regard, the discussion about location considered two historical factors equally: the Berlin Wall and

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2 “dass, sich auch ein vereintes Deutschland seiner nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit stelle” - Anon., “Holocaust-Denkmal neben’s Brandenburger Tor?,” Die Tageszeitung (7/2/1990), 71.
5 “Das zusammen ist eine nationale Aufgabe und keine reine Berliner Angelegenheit” - Anon., “Holocaust-Denkmal neben’s Brandenburger Tor?,” Die Tageszeitung (7/2/1990), 71.
6 “Es gehört an einen Ort, dem niemand auswichen kann, der deutsche Geschichte reflektiert” - Initiative zum Umgang mit dem “Gestapo-Gelände” to die Unterzeichner des Aufrufs der “Perspektive Berlin e.V.,” Berlin, 6 November 1989, 63.
the history of the Third Reich in Berlin. For many the most important factor in choosing a location for the memorial was that it be near to the former Berlin Wall and thereby near both former East and West Berlin. Lea Rosh, initiator of the proposal for a DEJE, for instance, proclaimed that “this memorial belongs in the center of the city; it belongs near the wall, in the view of East Berlin.”

Placing the memorial in the center of Berlin, where the division of East and West was most visible, would make it clear that the Germans recognized the Holocaust as “a deed of all Germans” and was therefore “the guilt of all Germany.”

For others, however, the issue of location was really about relevance to the history of the Holocaust in Berlin. The initial proposal of Lea Rosh for a permanent Holocaust memorial was made with the civic action group Perspektive Berlin, and they wanted it to be located on the grounds of the former Gestapo headquarters, called the Gestapo-Gelände. But in 1989, the Berliner Senat made the decision that the Gestapo-Gelände would hold a temporary, informational exhibit about the rise of the Nazis so in consequence, the newly formed FEDJE had to look for a new memorial location in Berlin. In keeping with their original idea, the FEDJE wanted the memorial to be located where Nazi government buildings had dominated Berlin during the Third Reich. The FEDJE thought that it would be appropriate for the memorial to be on or near “the former

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7 “Nein, dieses Denkmal gehört ins zentrum der stadt, es gehört in die nähe der Mauer, sichtbar auch von berlin-ost aus” - Initiative zum Umgang mit dem “Gestapo-Gelände” to die Unterzeichner des Aufrufs der “Perspektive Berlin e.V.,” Berlin, 6 November 1989, 64. See also: Forderkreis zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas, “Aufruf zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die Ermordeten Juden Europas,” Süddeutsche Zeitung (1990), 70.
8 “denn es war eine gesamtdeutsche Tat” - Initiative zum Umgang mit dem “Gestapo-Gelände” to die Unterzeichner des Aufrufs der “Perspektive Berlin e.V.,” Berlin, 6 November 1989, 64. See also: Forderkreis zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas, “Aufruf zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die Ermordeten Juden Europas,” Süddeutsche Zeitung (1990), 70.
power center of the Nazis between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz.”

The large empty area that had once held the *Reichskanzlei* in which Hitler, founder of the final solution, had lived quickly became the location around which most of the discussion centered.\(^9\) Lea Rosh suggested that there a memorial to the murdered Jews would allow the victims to “arise over the murderers” in a sense of final vindication.\(^10\) Conveniently located in the center of Berlin, this location could easily satisfy both historical needs: that the memorial be centralized between East and West Berlin and that it be in a location significant to the Holocaust.

Despite the symbolic justification of the former *Reichskanzlei* on both national and historical levels, there were several concerns raised regarding the location. Early on in the debate, a member of the German Parliament (*MdB*) became concerned that the grounds of the *Reichskanzlei* were too “spectacular” a location, implying that it would be overly dramatic to have the memorial there. Lea Rosh responded that whether or not it was “spectacular” did not matter, it was the “appropriateness” of the location that was significant.\(^12\) Other commentators raised the issue that the nearby *Führerbunker* (the bunker in which Hitler died) would detract from the *DEJE*. Some thought that the presence of the memorial within fifty feet of the bunker would serve to unjustly preserve the bunker as a place of historical importance. As I discussed in Chapter One, many others were already concerned about the *Führerbunker* as a rallying point for right-wing

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\(^10\) “*der Erfinder der sogenannten Endlösung*” - Förderkreis zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas e.V. to Hans Modrow (Ministerpräsident der DDR), Berlin, 6 April 1990, 70.


\(^12\) “‘*spektakulär‘, sondern um ‘angemessene‘ Orte’” - Bernhard Schulz, “Mit der NS-Zeit umgehen,” *Der Tagesspiegel* (7/3/1990), 72.
extremists. All sides involved seemed to find the idea that the bunker would now also be in the vicinity of the national Holocaust memorial worrisome.\textsuperscript{13}

Following the cancellation of the first competition in 1996, some called for the reevaluation of the location. As we have seen, many people had been dissatisfied with the \textit{Reichskanzlei} in the first place, so it is not surprising that when the first competition went awry, the location once again came into question. Peter Conradi, \textit{MdB-SPD}, even suggested that it was the location itself that “was an essential reason for the failure of the competition,” and it was thus inescapable as a point of contention.\textsuperscript{14} Most of the arguments against the \textit{Reichskanzlei} location reiterated earlier concerns. However, the arguments did change slightly, becoming more specific and pointed as people were now able to make arguments based on a particular design they had observed.

Some continued to fear that Berlin would become simply a depository for all of the nation’s memorials. \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} editor Thomas Lackmann repeated this argument in 1996 when he complained that “Berlin is already long a showplace of memorials, ‘a space of memory’.”\textsuperscript{15} It seems to me fair to say that arguments against the memorial’s location, like this one, were merely excuses not to have to deal with the issue or Holocaust memory. Berlin, after all, was no different than most of the world’s capitals in being a repository for national memorials. Thus, as it had before, this argument became more of a vague concern than a seriously considered point. The majority of those agreeing with the memorial in the first place, also agreed that there was no more

\textsuperscript{14} “ein wesentlicher Grund für das Misslingen des Wettbewerbs war.” Peter Conradi, “Bescheiden trauern,” \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung} (1/3/1996), 564. \\
appropriate location in Germany for a national Holocaust memorial than in its newly reinstated capital, Berlin. As a result, the truly contentious arguments were about which location inside Berlin was the most appropriate.

The main opponents of the Reichskanzlei location contended that the center of Berlin was not conducive to the task of holding a Holocaust memorial. Conservatives seemed to find distasteful reserving the center of Berlin for the murdered Jews of Europe. Architect Salomon Korn, for example, said that the Reichskanzlei location was “too central, because German history is more than only memory of the Jews” and placing this memorial there could be seen as reducing German history to that event. While using this view to further his own memorial-design agenda, Hungarian author and later President of the Academy of Art in Berlin Gyorgy Konrad took Korn’s argument in a different direction, claiming that a “Holocaust memorial in city center would fuel anti-Semitism” because it would be so fundamental to the city’s core that it would force respect from all members of the nation. The idea behind this comment was that, as a memorial that sat in the center of Berlin, people would be forced to encounter it on a daily basis – whether walking to work, strolling through the Tiergarten or eating lunch in a nearby café. Without having a choice as to whether or not they wanted to visit it, Konrad feared that people would begin to resent the memorial’s central location and then ultimately resent that which it remembered.

Just steps away from Berlin’s famous icon, the Brandenburg Gate, and its primary mainstreet, Unter den Linden, a major concern about the Reichskanzlei location was that

it would be overwhelmed by tourists.\textsuperscript{18} While certainly the point of the memorial was to encourage visitors, the FEDJE did not intend it to be to be a place for fun vacation memories but for serious reflection and meditation. The chance that this location could stimulate the presence of visitors who were not so much concerned with the engaging in Holocaust memory led architecture expert Bruno Flierl to question whether this was the correct approach to the past.\textsuperscript{19} A second aspect of this tourist issue, Die Tagezeitung said, was that the Reichskanzlei location was situated among some of the most “high traffic streets” in Berlin, including Ebertstrasse, Wilhelmstrasse, Strasse des 17. Juni, Leipziger Strasse and Unter den Linden.\textsuperscript{20} Many thought that the “dominance of motorized traffic” would distract visitors from serious contemplation at the memorial and make the entire effect of an otherwise powerful memorial underwhelming.\textsuperscript{21}

Many newspapers raised a final argument against the central Reichskanzlei location, mainly that among the highly visited streets and powerful historic symbols that Berlin-Mitte had to offer, the DEJE would be “an ‘island of sorrow’ . . . cut off from the real locations of history.”\textsuperscript{22} This sentiment resonated in multiple articles following the first competition, the most dramatic of which suggested that “it is twisted to block the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} See, for example: Bruno Flierl as quoted by Dr. Horst Moritz, “Kommentar,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (2/14/1997), 665.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Bruno Flierl as quoted by Dr. Horst Moritz, “Kommentar,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (2/14/1997), 665.
\end{itemize}
empty space and future city center of Berlin with a monument of sadness.”

The solution to this, as Die Zeit journalist Thomas Assheuer and others suggested was not to isolate the Holocaust memorial, but to put it “in the center of power, in the area of the offices of the Chancellors.” This was the first and really only seriously considered alternative to the Reichskanzlei: the Platz der Republik, which is located between the Reichstag building and the contemporary Bundeskanzleramt.

Historian Reinhart Koselleck argued the Platz der Republik was not only a viable, but also a good location for the Holocaust memorial because of its symbolic location between the legislature, the Reichstag, and the house of the executive, the Bundeskanzleramt. Hitler’s role as dictator and his ability to achieve such total power resulted largely from his control over and manipulation of the legislative branch. Thus, this would be a reminder of the ever-important balance that a democratic government must achieve between its branches. Further, the visibility of this reminder of the Nazi crimes to the contemporary location of both branches would allow the memorial “to file a suit for memory on the place of current political decisions and not on the places of past-Nazi decisions.” Thus, Koselleck argued, forcing politicians to remember this past might have a greater effect in keeping Germany on the path of historical responsibility, as I will discuss in Chapter One, than leaving Holocaust memory in a non-governmental public space. Despite its merits, the Platz der Republik location did not receive a lot of

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support from the *Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* as they did not consider the *Platz der Republik* as a viable option. Lea Rosh in particular argued against it when she called the *Platz der Republik* “an historically wrong location, because the murder of the Jews did not come from the German people, but from a group of Nazis.”

Alternately, the most significant vote of confidence came from *Bundespräsidentin* Rita Süssmuth who sought “a symbolic location of actual German politics in the Government quarter.”

The inadequacies of this new alternative threw the benefits of the *Reichskanzlei* location once again into the light. First and foremost, the old arguments about its historical location surfaced. As discussed earlier, some preferred the location because of its proximity to the “deathstrip between East and West, in the middle of the wryly scarred wounds of the previous years.” Others still contended that the “location of the deeds must play an important role” and because the former *Reichskanzlei* was the closest Berlin had, it would have to suffice. Rather than seeing this location in the middle of Berlin as a detracting factor, some saw it positively, as providing “the unique chance for the memorial to create an entirely new city structure” and to bring the city into a new age of

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27 “*sei überdies ein historisch falscher Standort, da nicht vom deutschen Volk die Ermordung der Juden ausgegangen sei, sondern von einer Gruppe von Nazis.*” Lea Rosh as quoted by Dr. Horst Moritz, “Diskussion,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (2/14/1997), 662. Here Rosh is referring specifically to the inscription on the front of the *Bundestag* that reads “*dem deutschen volke,*” meaning “for the German people,” with the implication that this body of government was enacted by and for the people of Germany. Rosh argues that this was not the case during the Nazi years and that the *FEDJE* did not want to give the impression that the German people as a whole had enacted these policies.


unification. Historian and memorial initiator, Eberhard Jäckel supported the location precisely because it was “an important link between the inner-city and the Tiergarten, . . . a public space in the heart of a German capital,” that “brings the location as a memorial into contact with everything.” For Jäckel, this contact with and accessibility to the public at all times and on any occasion was irreplaceable. In the end, most agreed that the DEJE should be located at the former Reichskanzlei because, as Architect Arie Rahamimoff put it, most people believed that “the site which has been selected for the memorial is correct from the historical perspective as well as the urban context.”

Ultimately, most major groups participating in the memorial debate supported the Reichskanzlei option. Eduard Beaucamp believed that “the memorial cannot be placed more exactly and meaningfully,” and the Bundesregierung, das Land Berlin, the FEDJE and the ZRDJ echoed his sentiment.

At the conclusion of the first competition for the memorial’s design, The Senate Committee for Building and Housing explained the choice of location by saying, “we want to perpetually tell the story, which must be told, we want to look the truth in the eye as best we can, keep alive the warning for the future. The location expresses this.”

36 “mit diesem Denkmal wollen wir fortwährend die Geschichte erzählen, die erzählt werden muss, wollen wir der Wahrheit so gut wir können ins Auge schauen, die Mahnung für die Zukunft wachhalten . . . Der Standort des Denkmals . . . bringt dies zum Ausdruck.” Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen
Reunification highlighted the fact that physical location was clearly still so important to the way Germans understood their culture, politics and their own identity. Therefore, the location of the memorial had to be appropriate. While there were many issues discussed about the suggested location, as there would have been with any place chosen, the location at the gardens of the old Reichskanzlei was historically justified both in terms of the immediate temporal past, Cold War Berlin, and the immediate historical subject, the Holocaust.

Visualizing A Holocaust Memory: the First Design Competition

In early 1992, a journalist wrote that she wondered “how much room for suggestions with regard to things such as shape, execution and name would still be possible with [a design] competition.” In retrospect, the answer to this question was clear: there was a lot of room for discussion. From 1989 until 1999, there was, in fact, a great deal of debate over what physical form the memorial would take. Germans spent a great deal of time discussing, in both concrete and theoretical terms, what they thought the memorial should be. As a part of this discussion, many brought up Holocaust memorials and museums in other countries. In March 1995, after the announcement of the first design competition’s winners, Simon Ungers and Christine Jakob-Marks, the discussion began to focus on the appropriateness and feasibility of each design. But participants in the debate also discussed the public support of a third non-winning design by Frieder Schnock and Renata Stih. Later in 1996 when the Bund, Land Berlin and


FEDJE officially proclaimed that the first competition was a failure, the discussion changed once again to a theoretical one about what a DEJE should look like. Finally, in 1997-1999, as we will see, the discussion returned once more to the concrete designs as the newspapers analyzed the results of the second competition.

A great deal of the discussion about what form the Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas should take centered around developing a memory model, the form that a memorial should take, that would be appropriate for remembering the Holocaust in Germany. Early in the flood of newspaper articles that addressed this subject for almost a decade, Gabriele Riedle of Die Woche outlined what she saw as the four types of memory models used in Germany at the time. The first model was to take a historical location and rebuild so that it was beneficial to a productive modern society. She suggested Berlin’s Potsdamer Platz as an example. The allies had destroyed it during World War II, but it later became Berlin’s most dynamic and popular downtown area as it had been in the 1920s. The second model was to create a place of “memory through artificially produced authenticity,” such as a museum, which used stories and pictures to evoke emotion. The third model was to build an abstract memorial to represent a particular historical event or concept, one which would allow viewers to interpret and experience that memory in the way they chose. Finally, the fourth model was to document the past and inundate the viewer with factual information and historical documentation so that he or she would remember the past as the facts presented it.

While the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE never considered the first model, they did discuss the appropriateness of the second and fourth models and used the Holocaust

museum in Washington DC as a reference point. In 1993 the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum opened in Washington DC as a documentation and research center and additionally as a place of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust. The museum is still open to the public 363 days a year and uses artifacts, photographs, personal stories and horrifying historical film to bring visitors into the past. While the Germans marveled at its conception as both “a museum and memorial simultaneously,” reaction against this type of memorial as appropriate for Germany was strong. President of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland Ignatz Bubis in particular opposed using this type of memory model in Germany. He maintained that Germany did not need a museum because Germany had “the horrific places before our eyes.” He and others saw no need for this central memorial to evoke an artificial sense of the past when visitors could visit the “places of horror” themselves. The fear was that the government’s focus on creating museums instead of on preserving real historical sites would lead to the development of the artificial instead of the real, both literally and in terms of memory. This is a topic I discussed more fully in Chapter One. According to Bubis and others who agreed with his perspective, a museum was not an appropriate or acceptable memory model for a national Holocaust memorial in Germany.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was not a complete loss, though, as a model for Germany’s form of Holocaust remembrance. One journalist contended that

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“the success of the D.C. Holocaust museum speaks for itself. The desire for information is vast,” and thus the German Holocaust memorial should be somewhat instructive.\(^{44}\) While Lea Rosh and the \textit{FEDJE} refused to have a memorial based on a pure documentation model, they also did not want “a thing that only evokes emotions.”\(^{45}\) The German Holocaust memorial would have to incorporate both informational and thought-provoking elements. Director of the \textit{Kunsthalle} Bern and art critic Harald Szeemann described the balance, it must be a synthesis “of the time-transcendent memories of individuals and emotional inner-turbulence.”\(^{46}\) It would have to be a different type of memorial, “a reflection place.”\(^{47}\) While these thoughts were expressed early on, at least initially the \textit{Bund, Land Berlin} and \textit{FEDJE} seemed to agree that only through the means of the abstract, through art, would it be possible to achieve Holocaust memory. Because the \textit{Bund, Land Berlin} and \textit{FEDJE} had rejected the museum and documentation models, most agreed that “the artistic form must be particularly thought about.”\(^{48}\)

The idea of a work of art as a memorial was a prevalent topic of discussion. Some discussed art as “a symbolic language” that was the most appropriate way to convey the meaning and importance of the Holocaust to the German nation.\(^{49}\) Especially, some proposed, because the memorial would be in the center of the city, and therefore visible


\(^{48}\) “\textit{also die künstlerisch gestaltete Form eines Gedenkens in politisch-pädagogischer Absicht, muss über diese Form nachgedacht werden}” - Bernhard Schulz, “Korrekt allein genügt noch nicht,” \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} (6/29/1995), 446.

to both intentional and unintentional visitors, it was “ever the more important that the aesthetic artistic exhibit display the heart of the content.”\(^{50}\) In other words, it was essential that the artistic design of the memorial immediately and clearly communicate the abstract concept it was representing: the Holocaust.\(^{51}\) Not everyone, however, lauded artistic representation as appropriate for the memorial. Early on in the discussion about art Christoph Stölzl, director of the *Deutsches Historisches Museum* (Museum of German History) in Berlin, stated that it was difficult for Germans “to talk about art in combination with the Jewish persecution.”\(^{52}\) He went on to say that Germans still wished to present themselves as being incapable of articulating their feelings about this past, that they wanted to remain in a form of historical amnesia as the immediate descendants of Nazi times had been. A variety of newspapers agreed saying “there is no artistically appropriate expression of the Holocaust;” they questioned the capacities of art throughout the entirety of the debate.\(^{53}\)

One of the biggest concerns about an artistic memory model was how it would be interpreted. As historian Peter Ambros said, “in the end, a work of art remains dependent upon the pair of eyes that observes it,” highlighting the fact that it was the viewer and not the deciding committee or even the artist who would have the final word in what the

\(^{50}\) “Umso wichtiger ist es, die ästhetisch künstlerische Darstellung der inhaltlichen Impulsgebung hinten anzustellen” - Michel Friedman, “Das Drama, die Umlust und die Unverschämten,” *Der Tagesspiegel* (1/18/1995), 239.


memorial conveyed. Particularly as the design competition drew to a close, there was much talk about what message the memorial should send to the viewer. Walter Jens, a President of the Academy of Art in Berlin, said that the Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas should not simply say “it was so,” but rather force the viewer to consider the question of “how was it possible?” Similarly, an article in the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung suggested that the memorial should not merely convey a warning like “you should not murder” because the Constitution and other laws were in place for that reason. Instead, the memorial had to compel visitors to “sincerely argue with the past,” a result that only abstract artistic expression could procure by forcing visitors to question themselves and their pasts. Only through this line of internal questioning and soul-searching would visitors be able to come to terms with the Holocaust, for some, their national history. As some pointed out, this would require that the memorial be completely open to the public at all times.

**Simon Ungers’s Blueprint**

When the design competition came to a close and the winners were announced, discussion moved away from the theoretical questions of “what should the memorial be?” to scrutiny and debate over each of the first place designs for the memorial. One of the competition’s two winners was Simon Ungers, an architect from Cologne. His design included a massive, elevated square comprised of four steel beams supported by four

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concrete blocks, which were to be located in the corners. In the beams, the names of *Konzentrationslagern* (*KZs*, concentration camps) were carved out in such a way that sunlight would shine through the holes and project the names of the *KZs* onto the ground or anything in the path of the sunlight. The square would be 279 feet squared and it would be elevated twenty feet, giving it gargantuan dimensions.⁵⁹

People either loved Simon Ungers’s design or hated it. Those who favored it saw it as a complete success, saying that Ungers had designed a memorial that communicated the artistic message to those viewing it from a distance and kept the message’s significance even upon closer examination. The memorial projected the *KZ* names onto the ground, large enough so that non-visitors would see them from a distance. Close up as well, a visitor would be able to see the number and individual names of all the *KZs*.⁶⁰ Ignatz Bubis preferred this design for its artistic symbolism and appropriateness, and supported its construction throughout the post-competition debate.⁶¹ The vast majority, however, considered Ungers’s design inadequate to communicate the meaning of the Holocaust because it failed to cause Germans to really struggle with their past. Micha Brumlik, a German educationalist, suggested that the design would merely serve as “a warning against the murders concocted by the Germans and collectively carried out by

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⁵⁹ 85 meters squared and 6 meters high
the masses.” He went on to say that because the design communicated only an admonition, it failed to evoke a “dialectic of horror and escaping oneself.” It seems to me that this design did not satisfy the demand that the memorial ask a question of its visitors, one with which they must struggle internally. Instead, Ungers’s design simply made a statement about the horrors of the Holocaust.

**Christine Jakob-Marks’s Blueprint**

The second first-place winner of the first design competition was Christine Jakob-Marks, an architect from Berlin. She proposed a 328-square foot and 23-foot thick concrete block that tilted upwards on a diagonal to a height of 36 feet. Atop this concrete block, were large pieces of rock and dirt from Masada, a location in Israel where the Jewish inhabitants had killed themselves in order to avoid capture by the Romans. Additionally, the names of the Jewish Holocaust victims were to be engraved in the concrete with blank space left to remember unknown victims. Among the names and Masada rock, the design showed paths on which visitors could walk. Because of its appearance and shape, many called this the “gravestone” design, giving darker overtones.

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64 100m x 100m x 7m, 11m
to an already ominous subject. Of the two first place designs Jakob-Marks’s aroused by far, the most discussion and controversy.

The first controversial issue was that of size; the dimensions of the concrete block were massive, filling the entire given area and rising to a height of almost two building stories. Before the design competition took place, Ignatz Bubis stated that he was skeptical of making the DEJE an average size, as “average” memorials were prevalent in Germany and especially in Berlin. He therefore sought a memorial the sheer size of which would force people to notice it, a memorial that was not just ordinary.\footnote{Joachim Rogge, “Berlin tut sich schwer mit dem Gedenken an die NS Opfer,” \textit{Bonner General-Anzeiger} (5/12/1994), 241.} Lea Rosh echoed this argument later when Solomon Korn reported her as supporting the idea “that the crimes were monumental and so must the memorial be monumental.”\footnote{“das Verbrechen sei monumental gewesen, also müsse auch das Denkmal monumental sein.” Salomon Korn, “Der Tragödie letzter Teil – das Spiel mit der Zeit,” \textit{Frankfurter Rundschau} (9/13/1996), 551.} Most people, however, rejected Jakob-Marks’s idea. Peter Conradi stated that “it is a mistake, to accept, that a crime of incomprehensible dimensions must be thought of in a monumental way.”\footnote{“Es ist ein Irrtum, anzunehmen, eines Verbrechens unfassbarer Dimensionen müsse auf monumentale Weise gedacht werden.” Peter Conradi, “Bescheiden trauern,” \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung} (1/3/1996), 564.} He suggested that the dimensions would draw the visitor attention to the wrong characteristics; the belief that quantity assured quality was an incorrect foundation for a memorial design.

In another argument regarding the proposals size, Klaus Hartung, a member of the Office of the Federal Press, suggested that the thought “that genocide could be answered with cubic capacity” threatened the basis for real reconciliation between victims and perpetrators.\footnote{“Aber auch nur der Anklang, die Massenvernichtung werde mit Baumassen beantwortet, gefährdet er nicht alles?” Klaus Hartung, “Schlussstein über die Vergangenheit,” \textit{Die Zeit} (6/30/1995), 447.} In other words, he expressed the fear that by building an enormous
memorial, Germany would stop feeling the need to reconcile with the former victims in other ways, as I discussed more fully in Chapter One. Further, it carried the implication that if such a wrong could be committed and made up for so simply, then what would prevent its recurrence? Many did not receive this criticism well and retorted, as Der Tagesspiegel did, that “to awaken suspicion that the size of the memorial could in any way symbolize the size of the crimes is tasteless, even more: obscene.” Many believed that it was unjust to accuse the FEDJE and Jakob-Marks’s team of trying to symbolize the enormity of the Holocaust, as they were simply working within the space allotted to them. Peter Conradi agreed with this and even suggested that the reason for the failure of the both first-place designs and therefore of the first competition was that the location provided to the artists and architects was so large, with the implication that they could not help but design something to fill that whole space.

Another argument against the size of the memorial was that people considered large memorials to be vestiges of 19th century remembrance. To them, the idea of a large memorial recalled the time of the Kaiser and undue grandiosity in self-praise for conquests. This was inappropriate for an enlightened remembrance of the Holocaust. Others suggested that the physical size of the memorial’s design would detract from or even be greater than the symbolic message Jakob-Marks originally intended to communicate. In other words, people would marvel at the size of the memorial and miss the concept behind it in doing so. Because the size of this proposed memorial received

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more attention than the concept behind it, it seems clear that it would not be capable of creating an ongoing national and individual self-examination of the Holocaust. Most agreed that size was an issue with which the German public and FEDJE would have to deal, as even the mere chance of stifling visitors’ memory of the Holocaust with grandeur was enough to condemn the design.

The second controversial issue regarding Jakob-Marks’s memorial design was her decision to have all of the names of the Jewish Holocaust victims engraved on the cement block. In Germany, Holocaust remembrance focused on giving a name back to the Holocaust victims, whom the Nazis’ dehumanized in death camps like Auschwitz by trading their names for numbers, so it seems clear that Jakob-Marks had good intentions. However, from the very earliest discussions over what the memorial should be, Lea Rosh and others stated that it should not be “all the names of the dead, no eye breaking statistics;” rather, it should be purely art. The most common complaint against the engraving of the millions of names on the concrete stone was that it would have the opposite effect of what the artist intended, because engraving millions of names in one place would bring anonymity. In other words, there would be too many names for any one to attain significance. Therefore, each of the individual victim’s names would be lost in the mass of names, just as they had been in the concentration camps. Even those who

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rejected other criticisms of Jakob-Marks’s design saw the issue of anonymity to be “at least largely understandable as an objection.”

Nevertheless, even after the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE definitively rejected Jakob-Marks’s proposal in 1996, using names in the memorial remained under discussion. When determining what qualities a new memorial should have, Dr. Julius Schoeps reiterated that by specifying all of the names, “millions of victims would remain anonymous.” The conversation did, however, shift slightly to look at more positive factors. Eberhard Jäckel, for example, explicitly stated that there was nothing wrong with naming names as long as it was done in the appropriate medium. Richard Schröder saw that “no one can give the victims back their individuality” because “the individual memory of individual fates is namely, in the best sense of the word, something private.” Finally, Dr. Julius Schoeps suggested the alternative that the Boston Holocaust memorial had utilized: the victims’ numbers.

Making the issue of using names more complicated was the fact that only around 4.2 million names were obtainable. The German Army kept no records of Jews murdered early during the war on the Eastern Front. Further, even gathering the available lists and compiling them would be “difficult to perform” as they would have to be obtained from all of the concentration, death, and work camps in the many countries occupied by the

76 “Millionen Opfer, würden so anonym bleiben.” Prof. Dr. Julius Schoeps, “Diskussion,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (1/10/1997), 622.
79 Prof. Dr. Julius Schoeps, “Diskussion,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): Dokumentation 1997 (1/10/1997), 622.
Third Reich. In the midst of this discussion, scandal broke out because the director of Yad Vashem in Israel, Avner Shalev, complained that no one from the FEDJE or from the German government had spoken to him about the project. He stated that the memorial “in this design is absolutely impossible to realize.” Peter Conradi and Jewish religious philosopher Dr. Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich agreed, saying that “denoting 6 million names on the memorial” was a “personal and technical impossibility.”

As one could imagine, finding and engraving all of the names of the murdered Jews would be an incredibly difficult task. When the Nazis officially declared their racial policies in the 1935 Nuremberg Laws, they defined a Jew as anyone who had more than three grandparents without Christian baptismal certificates. Because the Nazis believed “Jewishness” to be a racial characteristic that could be genetically inherited, it did not matter whether the persecuted considered themselves to be Jewish, practiced Judaism or even if they themselves had a Christian baptismal certificate, a topic I discussed more fully in Chapter Two. By calling the memorial the Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas and engraving the names of the murdered “Jews” on the memorial, the memorial would “allude to the members of the Jewish religious community – or, it follows, would laminate the National Socialist definition of the Jews as a race.”

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guilty of the same racist categorization of Jewishness as the Nazis, as I discussed in Chapter Two. I think it is clear that Lea Rosh and the FEDJE were trying to, in a way, build an environment of reconciliation for the Holocaust victims and that therefore this accusation is extreme.

In fact, the idea of engraving 4.2 million names on the cement block was one of the biggest deciding factors in Chancellor Kohl’s ultimate veto of the design. However, the issue of the names was not forgotten after Jakob-Marks’s proposal was rejected. During the forums of 1997 that occurred between the two design competitions, which I will discuss in Chapter Four, many people suggested that the idea of using the names of the victims was actually a good idea, but that it needed to be presented in a more formal way. Ignatz Bubis, for example, suggested that “the names must naturally be captured in a documentation center and not together with a memorial.” This would give the sense that the names were part of an ongoing research-gathering process rather than the definitive list of Jewish victims whom the memorial remembered.

Not all of the criticisms of the memorial were particularly controversial. Many simply thought that Jakob-Marks’s design was insufficient on both artistic and symbolic levels. Salomon Korn stated that “the giant gravestone has little to do with art” and later said that “a gigantic plate through its tilt has nothing to do specifically with the National

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Socialist genocide of the Jews." Both statements communicated the feeling that the design, symbolism and message were misaligned and therefore that the design failed in its purpose. If visitors could not consistently connect the symbolism in the form to the Holocaust all the way through the memorial’s design, than it could not communicate its meaning. If the design failed as a piece of art by leaving confusion instead of inspiring a dialogue about the Holocaust, than it would not fulfill its proposed function within German society.

The Bus Stop! Proposal

Having liked neither the design by Simon Ungers or Christine Jakob-Marks, newspapers reported that a large part of the German public had actually preferred a third design, one that had taken third place in the first design competition. Frieder Schnock and Renata Stih proposed a conceptual memorial that they called Bus Stop!, which did not work within the limitations given to them through the competition. They proposed to create a series of public transportation buses painted red, which would leave from locations in Berlin and take passengers to concentration camp sites. These buses would be highly visible to members of the general population in their everyday lives and the design itself would take advantage of the historical locations that Germany had to offer. Further, a central bus terminal would offer general information about the destinations and the Holocaust. The public lauded this

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proposal because it would not be just another memorial in Berlin and would make use of
the real physical locations used in the Holocaust. Further, it would provide information
and generate discussion about the Holocaust.

The difference between this memorial and others, as Peter Reichel pointed out,
was that it was both interactive and communicative rather than obscure and
monumental.\footnote{Peter Reichel, “Nationale Pietät – ein deutsches Politikum,” \textit{Universitas Nr. 603} (9/1996), 555.} The \textit{Bus Stop!} proposal showed that “memorials should be more than
monuments” and could invite their visitors not simply to take pictures and stare, but to
involve themselves and become a part of an experience of memory. The public, to a large
degree, did not engage in a critical debate over this proposal.\footnote{Peter Reichel, “Nationale Pietät – ein deutsches Politikum,” \textit{Universitas Nr. 603} (9/1996), 555.} This seems to have been
the case largely because it was never actually under serious consideration, as the two
winning designs were.\footnote{Gabriele Riedle, “Ein deutsches Dilemma,” \textit{Die Woche} (7/14/1995), 468. Jürgen Busche, “Ein
Holocaust-Mahnmal für Berling,” \textit{Süddeutsche Zeitung} (7/15/1995), 471.} As Editor Thomas Lackmann made clear, intellectuals saw this
memorial as being primarily a tourist attraction because of the high level of interaction
that it provoked.\footnote{Thoms Lackmann, “Einmal Auschwitz – und zurück,” \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} (2/7/1996), 498.} This was precisely the result that they were trying to avoid. As such,
he said, “hardly anyone took this grotesque proposal seriously.”\footnote{“ernst genommen hat den scheinbar grotesken Entwurf zunächst kaum jemand” - Thoms Lackmann,
“Einmal Auschwitz – und zurück,” \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} (2/7/1996), 498.}

With this last significant proposal of the first design competition, I will end my
discussion of this competition itself. What we have seen by following the issues of design
and location chronologically through early1996 is the remaining difficulty of the German
people with coming to terms with their past. They were still unable to construct a
monument or even pick an adequate design because, as we saw in Chapters One and
Two, they still could not sufficiently articulate the meaning this memorial would hold or

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  \item \footnote{Peter Reichel, “Nationale Pietät – ein deutsches Politikum,” \textit{Universitas Nr. 603} (9/1996), 555.}
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  \item \footnote{Gabriele Riedle, “Ein deutsches Dilemma,” \textit{Die Woche} (7/14/1995), 468. Jürgen Busche, “Ein
Holocaust-Mahnmal für Berling,” \textit{Süddeutsche Zeitung} (7/15/1995), 471.}
  \item \footnote{Thoms Lackmann, “Einmal Auschwitz – und zurück,” \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} (2/7/1996), 498.}
  \item \footnote{“ernst genommen hat den scheinbar grotesken Entwurf zunächst kaum jemand” - Thoms Lackmann,
“Einmal Auschwitz – und zurück,” \textit{Der Tagesspiegel} (2/7/1996), 498.}
\end{itemize}
even what the Holocaust was in their eyes. In Chapter Four I will examine the post-design competition discussion and continue on to look at the second design competition. There I will show that as these issues I discussed in Chapters One and Two gradually moved towards a consensus, so did the Germans ability to decide upon the form their collective memory of the Holocaust would take.
Chapter IV
Representing the Holocaust:
The Second Design Competition

In April 1996, the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE decided to end the first competition, essentially declaring it a failure. As I have shown, none of the memorial designs satisfied these three stakeholders, Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE in the competition. The liberal Süddeutsche Zeitung stated “the awarded memorial is too monstrous . . . the planned location is inappropriate . . . the whole memorial is even superfluous,” a view I discussed more completely in Chapter One.\(^1\) Peter Conradi, MdB-SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands), called the two options “too big, too loud, too grand”\(^2\) and literary critic Helmut Boettiger agreed when he said the DEJE must be “smaller, quieter and more meditative” than the proposed designs.\(^3\) Because the years of debate had still produced no national Holocaust memorial, historian Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner said that the whole issue of the DEJE had become a “laughing stock” in Germany and the eyes of the world.\(^4\) While the Süddeutsche Zeitung called the DEJE “the ‘impossible’ memorial,” the continuing discussion over what the memorial’s design implied that hope for the memorial was not completely lost.\(^5\)

Renewed Debate on what the Memorial Should Be

From the end of the first competition in mid-1996 through the beginning of the second design competition in October 1997, the discussion once again became a debate

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over the ideal concept for the memorial. The highpoint of this discussion occurred between January and April 1997 as during this time, the *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* held three separate daylong colloquiaums to discuss the memorial process. Over the course of the three sessions, the group of invited artists, architects, historians and intellectuals discussed the following topics: “why does Germany need this memorial?,” “the location, its historical and political context, its future involvement in the city space,” “typology and iconography of the memorial, way to realization.” The first topic I examined in Chapter One, I examined the second topic in Chapter Three, and the final topic I will discuss here. While the 1997 forum was the highpoint of this discussion, those participating in the debate argued the question long before and long after the colloquium ended.

The argument over what the memorial should be after the first competition existed primarily between supporters of, what I call, a dialectical memorial, one that provoked discussion, and supporters of, what I term, a didactic memorial, one that educated. Walter Jens captured the essence of the difference between dialectical and didactic memorials when he said that a memorial to the memory of the murdered Jews of Europe should not evoke “it was so,” but it should produce the difficult questions of how and why. A didactic memorial would simply state “it was so” because it would explain very clearly the historical facts of the Holocaust. A dialectical memorial, however, would force the viewer to ask him or herself a question and struggle with it in trying to come to terms with an answer. It would be ambiguous, unclear and would force the viewer, not the memorial, to play the active role in the visit to the memorial. As Professor of Art

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Philosophy Robert Kudielka said, “a holocaust memorial for Germany cannot simply be only a place of mournful thoughts and historical warning;” it must change its viewers.⁷

Art scholar Tilmann Buddensieg explained that in the proper design, “the viewer is part of the memorial; the ambivalence of the meaning of the symbols is wanted” because it would incite the variety of individual responses that such a memorial should seek.⁸ Those who sought a dialectical memorial believed that the meaning a visitor derived from the memorial should be individual and not imposed but inspired by the memorial. Salomon Korn agreed that the DEJE would only be successful “if it is dialectical.”⁹ A memorial that calls for a coming to terms with the horrific crimes of the Nazis “must address something in the viewer that rudimentarily exists in him,” in this case knowledge of his or her ancestors’ connection to these crimes, “and leave him to respond.”¹⁰ Without such a dynamic, the nation would be unable to overcome the horrors of its past.

The opposition argued that this memorial must be didactic, that it must explain to the viewer what he or she is observing.¹¹ For example, social historian Jürgen Kocka, who had aligned with the liberal historians in the Historikerstreit, supported a didactic memorial and said that the visitor “needs information: about victims and perpetrators,

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about cause and associations, he needs explanation and meaning.”

In this argument, Kocka turns the viewer into a passive observer who is incapable of interpreting a more ambiguous representation of the past on his or her own. Not all arguments went that way, however. Peter Conradi, for example, did not argue that the visitor needed such information but that “the memory and thought of the victims of the Holocaust should be stronger,” that it would be enhanced “when bound with the documentation and information center about the crimes.”

Historian Werner Hofmann took the position that anything but a documentation center was “an aesthetic falsity,” arguing against the ability of art to communicate the crimes of the Holocaust, a position I will explore in detail later in the chapter.

When the Land Berlin decided in 1996 that it “should not bind the project of a Holocaust memorial to a documentation and information center about the crimes,” discussion quickly shifted back to an artistic, symbolic and conceptual version of a DEJE. In part, this argument said that no one historical location or museum could “represent the totality of memory” and that it was the job of a memorial to do so, because “art alone is in the condition to broker the senses.”

During the 1997 forums about how to proceed with the Holocaust memorial following the first design

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competition, Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner said that “the majority of the discussants pled for a symbolic,” as opposed to the purely informative, approach to the memorial. However, not all agreed that it was possible to find “an iconography for the collective persecution of a people.” What we see here is the emergence of a much larger shift in the debate over memorial designs from the purely intellectual dialectic versus didactic argument to a discussion over the appropriateness of art for the purposes of a Holocaust memorial. The Role of Art

As we saw in statements like “art alone is in the condition,” meaning that art is the only medium capable of expressing the feelings associated with the Holocaust, many Germans wanted art to be successful and the solution to their Holocaust memorial problems. However, following the failure of first design competition that attempted to draw out purely artistic models, it was time for society, according to art critic Eduard Beaucamp, to stop being “bound to blind trust in ‘art’” and to begin to question its appropriateness. This question was formulated in several different ways. Art scholar Heiner Bastian asked why “has no one really asked the question of whether art can give an adequate picture of the agony of catastrophe and calamity” that occurred during the Holocaust. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung’s architecture critic Dieter Bartetzko questioned whether contemporary art was in the position to give shape to the complaints

and accusations that arose after the first competition. Art critic Eduard Beaucamp asked whether or not “art, as it is provided today in all its varieties, willful and competent” of expressing what it means to remember the Holocaust? Implicit in all of these questions was the opinion that art historian Werner Schmalenbach gave: “our trust in art is sunk.”

As early as 1996, Peter Conradi had said that “one will give consideration to the competition, if one is clear that the task of remembering the Holocaust through artistic means is almost impossible.” He thought, and others agreed, that the Holocaust was too horrific, too complex and too incomprehensible for art to express. “No picturely depiction,” Jens Jessen, Features editor for the *Berliner Zeitung*, said, “can be appropriate” for this type of memory. Historian Michael Wolffsohn went so far as to say that art was not just an inappropriate means, but made a Holocaust memorial “artificial because art can only express that horror through means of aesthetics” and not with harsh realities as the real locations and factual descriptions could. Whereas Werner Schmalenbach said that “only a singular artist can bring about the spectacular task,” holding out hope that one such an artist existed, Jürgen Kocka’s statement, “art alone is

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not enough,” seemed to reverberate for most people.³⁰ Even Lea Rosh said that “a memorial that is only art is not wanted” after the failure of the first competition.³¹

**Second Competition Results**

After the year of discussion following the first design competition, the **Bund**, **Land Berlin** and **FEDJE** decided that having a second design competition was the best way to proceed with the memorial building process. This second design competition was held from June to November of 1997 and judged by a **Findungskommission** that included architect and memory expert James Young, director of the **Deutsches Historisches Museum** in Berlin Christoph Stölzl, director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Bonn Dieter Ronte, art historian Werner Hofmann, and architecture expert Josef Paul Kleihues.³² Instead of inviting anyone to participate, this time the competition was opened only to twenty-five artists and architects from around the world. The newspapers showed that the general reaction to the second competition’s results was definitely more positive than the reaction to the first competition’s results had been.

Responding to the earlier issue over the size of the memorial designs that had come out of the first competition, Konrad Schuller said that “the dimensions are in most cases more moderate,” and thus more acceptable.³³ Interestingly, while the intellectuals seemed to find the results of the second competition to be more appropriate, the public was less apt to be pleased. At the public viewing of the memorial designs, a guestbook was available in which visitors could record their thoughts. One visitor outright disagreed with

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³² James Young, “Germany’s Holocaust Memorial Problem – and Mine,” The Public Historian (Fall 2002), 71-72.
Schuller’s point and stated that “the four suggested memorials are too big.”\textsuperscript{34} Another guest said that “these memorials speak to no one,”\textsuperscript{35} a view perhaps also reflected in the comment that “one needs too long to understand” any of the designs.\textsuperscript{36}

**Non-Winning Options**

Before discussing the designs that the Jury selected as finalists, I will discuss four interesting memorial options that the *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* decided not to consider as a result of the competition, either because the designs were suggested between competitions or failed to be chosen as finalists. The first plan, the Silent Minute, came out of belief that the memorial “that disappears or that one cannot and should not see, because it is only in the heads of the people” is the best kind of memorial, as stated by Joachim Riedl of *Die Zeit*.\textsuperscript{37} The thought behind this statement was that the memories of the Holocaust were everywhere and could not exist solely in one place. During the second day of the 1997 colloquiums held to discuss how to proceed in the memorial debate, documentary-film director Jacqueline Görgen suggested developing a “silent minute, that is a quiet collective commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust.”\textsuperscript{38} This silent minute would be held “in unity with the Israelis on Holocaust Remembrance Day ‘as a sign of the solidarity of our sorrow and wishes never to forget.’”\textsuperscript{39} There were two

\textsuperscript{38} “eine Schweigeminute einzuführen, also ein stilles kollektives Gedenken an die Opfer des Holocaust.” Jaqueline Görgen as quoted by Dr. Horst Moritz, “Diskussion,” Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (Hg.): *Dokumentation 1997* (2/14/1997), 683.
primary criticisms of this idea. The first was that it would be a “horrid embarrassment” if most people did not partake in the moment of silence.\textsuperscript{40} If that were the case, there would effectively be no Holocaust memorial in Germany. This revealed the second criticism, really a flat out rejection, for Lea Rosh the Silent Minute was “a completely other question. We want to build a memorial.”\textsuperscript{41} For the \textit{FEDJE}, only a physical object would satisfy, a legitimate request, because a monument is a form of permanent memory that cannot be modified without a great deal of approval or funding.

The second plan was proposed after the 1997 colloquiums were over, prior to the beginning of the competition. In April, journalist Henryk Broder proposed that the land of the former \textit{Reichskanzlei} be offered to the State of Israel as a location on which it could build a new Embassy in the new capital. Israel was already a contentious issue for its instability as a nation and questionable foreign policy initiatives in Lebanon and with Palestine, the idea of creating the embassy as “a form of ‘living memorial’” raised much controversy.\textsuperscript{42} Peter Conradi responded critically that the Holocaust embassy memorial “could attain a completely different distinction: the Holocaust as a ‘foundational sacrifice’ for the State of Israel.”\textsuperscript{43} As I discussed in Chapter One, one criticism of the Holocaust memorial in Germany was that through the memorial it would use the Holocaust victims to establish a new German national identity. Here, Conradi takes this same idea and says that should the embassy idea come to fruition, than the Holocaust victims would become the basis for Israeli identity and not for German identity. Also,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40}“entsetzliche Peinlichkeit” - Dieter Bartetzko, “Was ist angemessen?,” \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung} (1/14/1997), 633.
\item \textsuperscript{42}“eine Art ‘living memorial’” - Henryk M. Broder, "Unten und oben," \textit{Der Spiegel} (4/21/1997), 744.
\end{itemize}
Conradi made the point that if the memorial became an Israeli embassy, than "the memorial would be there not as a memorial of the Germans, but as a memorial of the State of Israel."\(^\text{44}\) According to him, a memorial that did not act for the German nation was unacceptable. Interestingly, only people who were actually interested in seeing the proposal through were Germans. According to Henryk Broder, “the Israelis – the embassy in Bonn and the consultancy in Berlin -- want to have nothing to do with it.”\(^\text{45}\) The proposal was quickly forgotten.

The third proposal for a Holocaust memorial that artist Horst Hoheisel proposed in 1995 was to destroy the Brandenburger Tor. His idea was to destroy an important piece of historical German identity that had helped lead to the rise of National Socialism and which remained an ever-present reminder of these earlier times. Symbolically, Hoheisel's idea was to put an empty space in the middle of Berlin, a representation of the void in the heart of German society caused by the deaths of the Holocaust victims. Obviously, such a radical plan was not likely to be carried out by any of the involved parties. Besides this, Salomon Korn argued that such a suggestion was inappropriate for the Holocaust because you cannot destroy an object of art built to honor one event, in order to symbolize another event.\(^\text{46}\) Having been built by Friedrich Wilhelm

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II as a sign of peace, it really had nothing to do with the Holocaust and therefore by destroying it, no real Holocaust memory would be achieved.

The fourth proposal, the Cobblestone Autobahn (highway) Kilometer was actually a product of the second design competition and very much a favorite at the two-month long public viewing of the designs that began in December 1997. Artists Rudolf Herz and Reinhard Matz developed this proposal. Their idea was to take one kilometer of the Autobahn, pave it with cobblestones and have a giant road sign at the beginning of the kilometer that said “Mahnmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.” The German Autobahn system had been built in the 1930s by the Nazis. While the Weimer Republic had conceived it, it was the Nazis who actually carried out the project, one of Hitler’s attempts to bring about economic recovery. The Autobahn project had been extremely successful, providing thousands of jobs and the benefit of improved infrastructure. Reconstructing a kilometer of the Autobahn to be a memorial for the Jewish Holocaust victims would remind German drivers of the cost of such incredible achievements. Based on the arguments made against memorial designs throughout the first and second competition, I think it is likely that the major reasons for this proposal’s failure, were that the memorial would be driven on, sped through and easily passed over entirely.

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Competition Winning Designs

While the designs I just described received a lot of attention in newspapers, they were not under serious consideration for the prize of the second competition. In November, 1997, the jury selected four proposals as competition finalists to examine more closely. The memorial jury requested that the architects and/or artists of each of these proposals give a presentation explaining their designs. In this section I will examine these four remaining proposals in detail.

The first of these proposals came from Jochen Gerz, a German conceptual architect. His memorial design was entitled “Warum?” (Why?) and his memorial literally embodied the dialectic this question invoked. The first part of his memorial was an area dominated by thirty-nine steel poles, atop which would be the question “why?” in each of the languages of Jewish victims from throughout Europe. Beneath this, the ground would be paved with the responses of visitors to this question, which would be engraved in the stones that made up the surface. The second part of the memorial was an enclosed building in which visitors would verbally be asked “why?” and then would respond both in writing and through conversation with each other. This conversation and these responses would be recorded with the possibility that a foundation would “design a library for the memorial with the texts that will come out of conversations with visitors.”48

Gerz’s memorial was favored by the FEDJE because it was an “interactive memorial” that not just allowed but forced its visitors to become a part of the memories it

portrayed. Gerz chose to center his memorial around the question “why?” because it was not a “question only for the victims or only for the criminals, but a question for everyone.” This was such a refreshing option from those given in the first competition because no one was excluded from the thoughts; it was for neither the victims’ nor the perpetrators’ descendants but for the entire German community and perhaps even for the world. Not everyone agreed with Gerz’s theory, however. Memory and architecture scholar James Young, for example, publicly stated that he believed the question of “why” was “exclusively the question of the criminals.” Some feared that it would actually inspire contemporary right-wing anti-Semites to answer the question according to their Nazi-inspired beliefs, thus defeating the memorial’s overall purpose. Besides this, the jury seemed to think that this proposal was not artistically symbolic enough and too straightforward. The FEDJE, however, did support “the pedagogically inspired work of Gerz” as one of their top choices.

The second design proposal finalist was Daniel Libeskind, an American architect born in Poland in 1946. Libeskind’s design for Berlin’s Jewish Museum had been chosen for construction just prior to this second competition. Libeskind believed that the core of a Holocaust memorial must represent “the emptiness that the Holocaust left behind,”

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concept that both his museum and memorial proposals reflected.\textsuperscript{54} By emptiness he meant that the Holocaust had killed so many people who could have led otherwise productive and meaningful lives. Thus, the art they would have produced, solutions they would have created and cures that they would have found remained empty spaces in history. Named \textit{Steinatem} (Stonebreath), Libeskind’s design consisted of five enormous concrete blocks in a straight diagonal line, parallel to one of the streets that defined the memorial’s property. The central feature of these stones would be the holes cut from them and encased in glass, voids that represented this “emptiness” Libeskind sought to convey. According to the \textit{Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung}, the \textit{Berliner Senat} favored Libeskind’s proposal.\textsuperscript{55}

While Libeskind’s memorial design was praised for its conceptual design and “high aesthetic qualities,” it was also criticized for precisely the same reasons.\textsuperscript{56} Author Julia Naumann wrote that his design “could appear to be too pretty,” a criticism that many made about the memorial designs produced for the second competition.\textsuperscript{57} That Libeskind found and explicated something symbolic and representative about every piece of his memorial design caused some, like art scholar Heiner Bastian, to be “astonished,


horrified at so many free metaphors.”58 Bastian seemed to argue that Libeskind’s memorial was too complicated, overly symbolic, and therefore that it lost its meaning in the visitors’ efforts to interpret. It honored the memory of that which never existed as a result of the Holocaust. Perhaps Klaus Hartung presented the harshest criticism when he said that “Libeskind’s design is probably the weakest . . . his design works like a self-quotation of a deconstructivist catalogue.”59 This latter comment suggested that Libeskind was concerned more with furthering his own architectural concepts and theories than with conveying Holocaust memory.

The third design finalist was German architect Gesine Weinmiller and her *Davidstern* (Star of David) proposal. Just as the name implied, this design was a large Star of David made of high stonewalls. However, this Star of David was no longer intact, it was shattered and the concrete walls that would have formed the sides of the star were staggered and tilted so that they presented only a vague resemblance of what the “whole” once was. Weinmiller intended this scattering of the stones to “symbolize the barbaric acts of destruction” that left the identity and people of Judaism shattered and broken.60 Her goal was to leave the visitors with their own thoughts in order to bring about feelings of reconciliation.61

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She intended not to provide the definitive, historical answers of a museum; as she said, “here there is definitely not clarification.” Die Tageszeitung lauded her design for its ability to “isolate the visitor and force him or her to grapple with the questions of Holocaust memory in an internal dialectic that museums could not provide.”

Additionally, in contrast to some of the other proposals, as we will see next, many thought Weinmiller’s to be a good choice because it was a wide-open space that was easy to protect, and relatively safe from vandalism.

There were two distinctive criticisms of Weinmiller’s design. The first concerned the symbol of the Star of David as it was “feared that Jews would be stigmatized” by such a symbol. Such a view implied that the Star of David had become such a stereotypical symbol of Jewish culture, that in terms of memory it had very little meaning. In fact, it was this symbol that the Nazis had used to label their Jewish victims. Should this symbol really be the permanent one of Holocaust memory? The second criticism, as the Berliner Zeitung said, was that the design was “too simple and arbitrary.” The whole proposal was merely a “scattered Star of David that says nothing;” the design did not hold any deeper meaning and did not cause serious reflection on the Jewish victims. Julia Naumann described it as “too pretty and in this

way also too harmless." She implied that it did not force visitors to really struggle with the Nazi past. Some attributed the design’s weakness to the fact that Weinmiller was only 34 at the time of the competition and was thus “not yet ready” to produce a design fitting for Holocaust memory. In his Informational Letter in 1997, Peter Conradi stated that Weinmiller’s design appeared to him “to be the weakest . . . a decision of the jurors for this work would be a compromise.” Despite the support she had received, Weinmiller’s proposal failed.

The fourth and last design finalists were American sculptor Richard Serra and architect Peter Eisenman and their proposal *Feld der Erinnerung* (Field of Remembrance). This design consisted of four thousand concrete pillars that varied in height from ½ inch to around 15 feet. These columns were arranged in such a way that a visitor could, and indeed was intended to, get lost inside of the memorial. The memorial would further disorient the visitor by the ground that would rise and fall throughout. The Eisenman/Serra design notably lacked any particular reference to Jewish culture or religion, a quality which Eisenman/Serra intentionally left out because they did “not want to produce a Jewish memorial.”

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the design came out, it immediately captured broad interest.\textsuperscript{72} The \textit{Berliner Zeitung} called it “the first persuasive Holocaust-memorial”\textsuperscript{73} design presented to date and the \textit{Süddeutsche Zeitung} said that their design had “so frighteningly perfectly accomplished the task” of an appropriate memorial to Holocaust memory.\textsuperscript{74}

There were two primary features of the Eisenman/Serra design that led to such complements. The first centered on the proposal’s “high aesthetic qualities.”\textsuperscript{75} While aesthetic, the memorial did not actually depict anything; it did not bring the visitor to a conclusion or even suggest a range of possible feelings or questions. Eisenman and Serra intended this to be the case because they did not want “nostalgia;” they wanted, as they said, “simply living memory, namely that of individual experience.”\textsuperscript{76} They did not want visitors to have to focus on the past, though they could if they so chose; their idea was to focus on the Holocaust, equally as it existed in the present day thought. They also wanted their memorial to force the visitor to reckon with something internal, not with something that they, the designers, suggested. Eduard Beaucamp reflected this when he said about the design that “only here is the visitor not an object of mental acrobatics and didactical procedures” because “here the art of impression dominates.”\textsuperscript{77}

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memorial. Eisenman went so far as to say that his “design is anti-symbolic” because even a symbol intends to communicate some kind of message. Eisenman wanted his memorial to “become an experience of the body” where the visitor developed his own meaning inspired via but not developed by the memorial.  

The second aspect of the design that elicited complement was the so-called “zone of instability” that the memorial created for the visitor, as he or she wandered through the disorienting columns that rise and fall along the way. Eventually, becoming so deeply trapped amongst the columns, there would appear to be no way out as the street and sometimes even sky were no longer visible. Out of this isolation came the instability Eisenman and Serra wanted to produce. Architecture scholar James Young supported and explained this effort by saying that German “memory begs no reassurance but disorientation.” This disorientation, and thus the memorial, would “strengthen the singular role of thought anchored in itself,” that is to say thought for its own sake, inspired by the visitor and for the visitor alone as opposed to a didactic memorial that gave thoughts and answers. Because the visitor is isolated in the memorial, it leaves endless possibilities for the thoughts and conclusions the visitor can draw. This, James Young said, is perfect because it “means an ongoing process” of Holocaust memory, “a continual question without a definite answer.”

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81 “und wird die eigene Rolle stärken, das Gedenken in sich selbst zu verankern” - James E. Young, „Die menschenmögliche Lösung des Unlösaren,“ Der Tagesspiegel (8/22/1998), 1116.
While lauded far more than any of the other memorial designs, Eisenman and Serra’s proposal was also highly criticized. On an aesthetic level, many found the design to be too abstract. Particularly President of the Academy of Art in Berlin Walter Jens and author Günter Grass led the opposition to the memorial based on the point that this “abstract installation” could not be appropriately “a place of quiet sorrow and memory.”

Because it was so abstract, many people would not find any real meaning in its design. The liberal Berlin daily, Der Tagesspiegel contended that there was nothing “more to read in the suggestion of Eisenman and Serra than a computer determined concrete-learning forest.” Some went further to criticize the fact that the design had no direct reference to the fate of the Jews and thus was questionable as a Holocaust memorial. Arguably, the title of the memorial was not enough to ensure that the memory provoked in the memorial actually connected to the Holocaust.

The most talked about and acted upon criticism of the Eisenman/Serra design concerned maintaining the memorial’s integrity through security. Newspaper articles raised the concern again and again that “it will be dirtied by people and their dogs” as they walked through, making cleaning crews necessary or condemning the memorial to a perpetually disgusting state. Further, adults would need to keep small children and dogs from running around and creating undue noise that would disturb the experience.

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was concern that the inability to see beyond a certain number of columns, and the ability to hide so well in the memorial meant that it was “an ideal place for graffiti” that would sullen both the superficial exterior and the ability of a visitor to reflect.\(^{88}\) For these same reasons, the memorial might be unsafe because people could easily be attacked without warning and without the comfort of rescue or chance of escape.\(^{89}\) Many newspapers said that something like Eisenman/Serra’s memorial would have to be guarded at all times and be well lit in order to be safe for public use; no plan for this had been made in the memorial’s original design.\(^{90}\)

Though widely criticized for the above reasons, the support for this design was such that “it seem[ed] to create itself already” without any official decree, as the Süddeutsche Zeitung said.\(^{91}\) Almost all recognized that “it only [had] a chance in modified form,” but unlike the other memorial proposals, the Bund, Land and FEDJE were willing to consider a modification of this proposal.\(^{92}\) Out of the criticisms came a new memorial proposal from Peter Eisenman called Eisenman II. Unwilling to consider the possibility of modifying the memorial design, Peter Serra dropped his name from the proposal and left all rights to Eisenman. The most significant changes had to do with the columns themselves. There would now be 2,600 of them, down from 4000 and the highest would only be around 8 feet tall, as opposed to 15 feet tall. Most importantly,


these columns would no longer be randomly placed, but aligned in long rows so that the
dead of the memorial was always visible throughout. This was intended to preserve the
feeling of instability while adding the possibility
of its being guarded, at least from the perimeter.
Also in terms of security, the columns would be
covered with anti-graffiti chemicals as well as to
light the memorial from underneath.\(^{93}\) Chancellor
Helmut Kohl also had the desire for the memorial
to include trees, largely outside of the columns,
but that would also begin to mix with the columns themselves.\(^{94}\) Eisenman saw no
problem with this and jokingly said that he would be okay with pretty much anything but
“naturally, no Christmas trees.”\(^{95}\)

**Alternative Options**

While Eisenman and Serra’s design was by far the favorite and most discussed of
the four finalist designs, the flaws I have examined and new government elections in
1998 kept even the Eisenman II design from winning in its revised form. As the
discussion evolved following the announcement of the finalists, and as disappointment
mounted, three new alternatives arose that I will now discuss. First, György Konrád,
president of the Academy of Art in Berlin-Brandenburg, proposed an entirely new type of
memorial. His thought was to create a *Garten* (Garden) which would have a playground
for small children and a reflection park for adults. This idea came out of both his belief

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\(^{93}\) See, for example: Bernhard Schulz, “Wogen der Erinnerung,” *Der Tagesspiegel* (8/26/1998), 1123;
\(^{95}\) "'Natürlich keine Tannenbäume'" - Robert von Rimscha, “Ich will einen Kunden,” *Der Tagesspiegel*
(6/14/1998), 1060.
that “shame and sorrow are not loud” and seemingly a reaction to the criticisms of previous memorial designs that they would contort the center of Berlin. Rather than this, Konrád wished “for a friendly memory place in the middle of Berlin.”

Those who supported Konrád’s design did so primarily for its new language of memory, which Konrád himself had described as “friendly.” Klaus Hartung who had so harshly criticized particularly Libeskind’s memorial design said that Konrád’s idea “shows more wisdom and humanness than the German memory debate has until now.” He implied that the previous nine years’ debate about shame, disgrace, sorrow, and horror was not actually what Germany needed and that Konrád’s proposal for a happier place would actually be more productive. On the other hand, those who criticized Konrád’s idea did so for this same reason. Journalist Harald Martenstein simply stated that “a Holocaust memorial will not be fun.” James Young had elaborated on this point before Martenstein when he said:

But a place that succeeds out of the screeches and smiles of living children’s happy relief, will not suffice as a German memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe. . . the Germans must realize that it is impossible to compensate for genocide in so playful a way.

The press, *Bund* and *FEDJE* had criticized Weinmiller and Libeskind’s proposals for precisely these same reasons, so it was unlikely that such a tame form of memory of the Holocaust was going to satisfy the majority that was looking for a real call to memory.

Michael Naumann, the new German Minister of Culture beginning in 1998, proposed the second new type of memorial after the second competition. As I stated earlier, Naumann was very much in favor of a highly didactic and less representational memorial. Thus, his plan consisted of three primarily informational parts. The first part was an interactive explanation for small children, a hands-on experience to which they could relate. The second part was a building that would house a satellite office of the Leo Bäck Institute. With locations already in New York, London and Israel, this institute documented and conducted research on Jewish history and culture. The third part would be a library of Holocaust history. Naumann’s proposal was a relief for those who had so long sought a didactic memorial that did not place so much import on art and symbolism. The sentiment expressed by Gerhard Kurtze “let us develop a memory library instead of stone monuments!” seems to suggest the wish for a transition from traditional types of memory to those that would produce learning and concrete thought as a library undoubtedly would.

There were several arguments against Naumann’s proposal, beginning with the simple fact that “a foundation is a foundation and not a memorial.” As I suggested earlier, the *FEDJE, Bund* and *Land Berlin* sought a physical memorial to the Holocaust

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victims and not a substitute. A further argument against replacing “a lasting monument with some sort of institution for historical instruction” as Naumann proposed to do, was that such a place “can tacitly turn into something else once the climate shifts.”¹⁰⁴ Jürgen Habermas made this argument, by which he meant that an institution that carried out memory primarily via human instruction was not a permanent thing. Human discretion and the interpretation of those who were teaching or presenting there would determine the memory they presented. As a result, should they decide not to focus on Holocaust memory, than the Holocaust would have no memorial in Berlin. Finally, Reinhard Rürup made the argument that a decision to follow through on Naumann’s proposal would “weaken and not strengthen” the existing memory places, as a representational memorial would, because it could be even more easily seen as a replacement.¹⁰⁵ The general opinion seemed to be, as the Berliner Zeitung said, Naumann’s proposal was a “stupidity”¹⁰⁶ and leaders of the Holocaust memorial debate like James Young stated that “the Holocaust memorial must not collapse on the witty suggestions of Michael Naumann.”¹⁰⁷

The third and final alternate proposal for a Holocaust memorial came from German theology Professor Richard Schröder, very late during the discussion in 1999. Schröder’s idea was to have the phrase “Du sollst nicht morden” (you should not murder) written in Hebrew script stand on the open area. Schröder believed this idea fulfilled the need for a physical memorial while at the same time alleviating the problem the DEJE

had created from the beginning, “namely the hierarchy of victims.” Because, he said, the message was one of universal appeal, it applied equally to all of the victims of the Holocaust. Meanwhile, the message would be written in Hebrew script, which recognized the singularity and uniqueness of the Jewish persecution. While his idea was received positively by many, including Mayor Eberhard Diepgen and author Thomas Schmid, as being the design “to have the greatest radiance,” at this point in the debate, those who were to make the decision found it to be all wrong. Lea Rosh was quoted as saying of the plan that it was “not only stupid and banal,” but also a late suggestion that was “at least misunderstood if not wrong.” Despite these objections, Schröder’s design was actually the only serious competition in the Bundestag for the proposal I will examine next: Eisenman III.

**Conclusion: Eisenman III**

What developed in mid-1998 was a combined version of Eisenman II and Naumann’s proposal. Because Naumann was the new Minister of Culture, supported by the new chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, his thoughts and opinions could not be ignored, in the same way that Eisenmann II could not simply be dropped from the table. What resulted was Eisenmann III. This proposal limited the Eisenman design to 1,600 columns in order to make room for a glass wall that would contain books, connected to a Holocaust research foundation. Beneath the memorial, there would be a network of lecture halls and offices which would didactically present the Holocaust. While some,

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like Stefan Reinecke, believed that “not art or didactic, but art and didactic” had “every chance to be realized,” many really thought that Eisenmann III went too far in modifying the original Eisenman proposal.\(^{112}\) In a letter to Peter Eisenman, Jürgen Habermas spoke emphatically against integrating the Nauman proposal into Eisenman II.\(^{113}\) Reinhard Rürup said that “the suggested museum would not strengthen but weaken the memorial,”\(^{114}\) a view which was reflected also by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that said a documentation center would “rob the memorial of its power.”\(^{115}\) There was further concern that now visitors would simply walk through the memorial without even thinking, because it was so small and well aligned.\(^{116}\)

In June, 1999 on a 314 – 209 vote, despite immense criticism, Eisenman III was approved by the *Bundestag*.

This decision did not represent the end to the *Denkmalstreit*. All of the issues surrounding the memorial continued to be discussed in Germany well after the memorial’s dedication in May 2005. This memorial, therefore, did not represent the end of debate over Holocaust memory in Germany as some had feared. Rather, the memorial showed that the Germans were capable of coming together to discuss an extremely


\(^{113}\) Habermas, Jürgen to Peter Eisenman, 16 December 1998, 1185.


difficult issue from their history: the Holocaust. Further, it showed that the Germans were able to reach some type of consensus on the issues surrounding the Holocaust even though it made some people uncomfortable and even though not everyone was completely satisfied. The physical existence of the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* represents both that consensus and the continued debate. It represents Germany’s coming to terms with the Holocaust.
The debate over the *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas (DEJE)* was an often tedious discussion lasting more than a decade that sought to bring a national, central German Holocaust memorial to fruition. The debate over the *DEJE* made it clear that Germany still had huge identity issues following reunification, issues that dated to the Second World War and that were clearly articulated.

In Chapter One, I examined the debate over the necessity and meaning of the Holocaust memorial. Despite the *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE*’s insistence throughout the decade-long debate that the memorial would be built, the question of whether Germany needed a Holocaust memorial was never resolved. Flowing from the conservative revisionism of the *Historikerstreit*, some argued that a memorial was good because it would allow Germany to forget, and even that the whole debate was bad for Germany because it continued to emphasize German shame. Those representing a more liberal perspective argued that the memorial was good because it would mean Germany would never forget and would teach and open discussion about the Holocaust for future generations. Some who supported this perspective also argued the memorial was unnecessary because it would mean a historicization of the past that would take the Holocaust out of contemporary memory. The ultimate consensus was that a Holocaust memorial would help to establish a much needed sense of German national identity. Not an identity based on forgetting the Nazi past or based on perpetual shame for the Holocaust but one of responsibility to promote democratic freedoms in Germany and the world.
In Chapter Two, I examined the course of debate about for whom the memorial would be built. This discussion raised the questions of the singularity and uniqueness of the Holocaust as the persecution of the Jews alone, or whether other victim groups like the Sinti and Roma should be included as well. Over time, the discussion changed to question whether the memorial should speak to the Jewish victims or to the perpetrators – the German nation. Ultimately, debate participants from both the victims and perpetrators perspectives reached a consensus that the memorial must really be for the future generations of Germans – the children of both victims and perpetrators – so that everyone might be called to memory of the Holocaust.

Finally, in Chapters Three and Four, I explored the debate over the form that the national Holocaust memorial should take. The course of this debate depended directly on the decisions the *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* made about how they wanted the memorial design process to proceed. At first, the discussion was theoretical and rudimentary and reached the conclusion that the national Holocaust memorial should be an artistic memorial as opposed to a museum or information center. When the first competition ended, participants debated how the specific features of the awarded proposals met or failed to meet their ideas for what the Holocaust memorial should be. This led to a second theoretical discussion lasting a year and half, which focused on the capability of art to capture the horrors of the Holocaust. Finally, the discussion following the second design competition led to the consensus on the Eisenman/Naumann proposal, which combined both artistic, symbolic, and informational, and instructive features. I also examined the discussion about the proposed location of the memorial and how deeply the Germans considered this historical importance of the ground on which the memorial
would stand. The determination that the memorial must be on a location that held symbolic importance both with regard to the Nazi past and to the more contemporary Cold War division of Berlin showed an eagerness to incorporate both the current and historical path in moving forward.

As we have seen, the Germans, through the course of the Denkmalstreit, really dealt with the significant issues left over from the Historikerstreit. They discussed the singularity of the Holocaust, the need for continued shame, the fear of forgetting the crimes and the desire for a new national identity. In order for Germany to build the national Holocaust memorial, Germans had to come to some sense of agreement on those issues and they did. There was always and remains a strong current opposed to the decisions made regarding the DEJE as these issues continue to be discussed today. It was not, however, the fact that not Germans even came to an agreement but that they dealt with these issues publicly and openly at all that is so significant. The Germans were able to build the DEJE even though the decisions they ultimately made caused some people to be uncomfortable.

The success with which Germany has dealt with its past is really illuminated when it is compared to other nations that have similarly tragic crimes in the past. Among the many horrors of the last three centuries were the Japanese genocide of the Chinese at Nanking, the United States’ genocide of the Native Americans and the Turkish genocide of the Armenians. Yet none of these perpetrator nations has come close to dealing with the crimes of its pasts as genuinely as the German nation has explored and come to terms with the Holocaust. In the following pages I will briefly examine the Japanese, United States’ and Turkish genocidal actions in terms of how the events exist in collective,
national memory. As we will see, at this point in time the Germans really have done a
good job, perhaps the most exemplary, in the process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung.

**Japan and Nanking**

The Japanese attack on the Chinese capital of Nanking occurred in December of
1937, just before World War II, resulting in its fall on December 13th. Over a period of
six weeks, the Japanese army committed terrible atrocities including massacre and rape
of noncombatant Chinese people resulting in the historical term for the event: the
“Nanking Massacre” or the “Rape of Nanking.”\(^1\) Hatred and racism between the Japanese
and Chinese had been deep-seeded over the centuries.\(^2\) The Japanese army did not seek to
exterminate every living Chinese, but to finally subjugate China to Japanese will.\(^3\) In the
process, however, they murdered an estimated 300,000 men, women and children.\(^4\)

For the rest of the Second World War period, the Nanking Massacre was not
discussed in Japan, or even in China and the West. With one notable exception, this trend
of silence continued in the post-war period. No reparations were paid; first and second
generations did not really question their responsibility for the crimes; generally Japan
avoided the issue of guilt entirely. The one exception was the Tokyo Trials of 1946, the
Pacific Theater equivalent of the Nuremberg Trials in the European Theater. During these
war crimes trials, the allies tried and executed Japanese generals and military chiefs for

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their participation in atrocities. Out of these trials the allies established that the crimes committed at Nanking precluded Japan’s sovereign right to wage war.\(^5\) In other words, the fact that the Japanese had committed this crime meant, on a fundamental level, that they had lost the ability to declare war as a nation. Notably, the allies did not hold the Japanese emperor responsible for the crimes at Nanking. The United States attempted to shield him in order to establish a positive relationship with Japan going into the Cold War.\(^6\)

Throughout the entire post-war period, the Japanese government and mainstream Japanese society focused completely on the Japanese role as victims in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.\(^7\) They ignored their role as perpetrators of the crimes in China. Only in the early 1970s did reports begin to flow in from China regarding the number of deaths at Nanking. Then, for the first time, progressive Japanese historians began to realize the atrocities committed at Nanking were greater than the total number of deaths from both Atomic bombings combined.\(^8\) It must be emphasized however that conservatives, who wanted to forget Japan’s criminal actions in China and focus on its role as a victim, controlled the rest of Japanese society and government.\(^9\) The textbook controversy of 1982 revealed the role of the Ministry of Education in minimizing the Nanking atrocities when it changed the wording in all Japanese textbooks from “invasion” of China to “advance into.”\(^10\)

\(^5\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, 4-5.
\(^6\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, xiii.
\(^7\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, 61.
\(^8\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, 58.
Almost paralleling the *Historikerstreit*, the early 1980s produced the Nankin Ronso or Nanking Debate in Japan. This debate was held between non-historians including journalists, writers, publicists and as a result the debate was largely non-historical and was instead political in nature. Begun by the conservative revisionist historians who sought to regain Japan’s right to wage war lost during the Tokyo Trials, the articles they published largely negated the factual basis for the Nanking atrocities.\(^{11}\) If they did not deny the occurrence of the Nanking Massacre completely, they said at least it was not in the numbers China had put forth and that it was the result of soldiers who had run amok as opposed to a direct military order.\(^{12}\) Some progressive scholars and even a few politicians rebuked these conservative claims, but the progressive viewpoint expressed itself in only a comparatively small portion of the large amount of Japanese literature published on the Nanking Massacre.\(^{13}\) Since then, while the minimizers or deniers have experience almost complete freedom of speech, progressives have faced difficulty and impediments from the government and conservative scholars and journalists.\(^{14}\)

As late as November 1998, at the time of the Chinese Head of State’s visit to the Japanese Prime Minister, Japan still refused to extend even a written apology to China for the massacre at Nanking.\(^{15}\) It seems clear that Japan has not faced up to its past as murderers in any significant way. Like the Germans, the war-time and immediate post-war period met with almost complete silence on the subject. After the immediate post-


\(^{13}\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, 64, xvi.

\(^{14}\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, 84.

\(^{15}\) Li, Sabella, Liu, *Nanking 1937*, 11.
war period, however, during which the West Germans focused almost exclusively on coming to terms with their crimes, the Japanese considered themselves only as victims. The Japanese government even sought to repress the history of the crimes, which the German government has never attempted to do. The Japanese have a long way to come in terms of dealing with the memory of their wartime crimes.

**United States and Native Americans**

Given the genocide that has occurred on America’s own soil, I suppose criticism of any other nation’s problems with coming to terms with their past crimes is an ironic stance for an American to take. While mistreatment of the Native American populations dates back to 1492 and Columbus’s discovery of America, I will begin my discussion from a much later date and will only discuss a few specific policies and actions among the many that have occurred. In 1830 the United States government declared the Indian Removal Act, which allowed Native Americans to be forcibly uprooted from desirable land that was then given to settlers. The Native Americans were secluded from American society and put on reservations and/or sent off to remote parts of the country including via the Trail of Tears, among many other fates. Families were split up, children were often left behind or separated from their parents, and people were not usually given warning to grab belongings or even a coat. Initially, tribal leaders were able to bargain with government officials to delay or avoid the deportations, in March 1871 however, the government declared that Indian tribes were no longer sovereign and therefore did not have bargaining power with the United States government.  

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In the 1890s a whole new set of policies were enacted to begin to “civilize” the Native Americans. This included the 1891 Indian Appropriation Act that had two effects. First, it meant that Native Americans were “given” land that they were supposed to farm – a violation of their cultural traditions. Second, it meant the transferring of Native American children to white boarding schools where they were taught white values while being forcibly stripped of their heritages. If families refused to send their children to these boarding schools, they gave up their right to receive rations.\textsuperscript{17} Perhaps the most barbaric of all policies was begun in 1930s when the Bureau of Indian Affairs began to sterilize Indian women under a false medical guise. This was a part of a broader policy of sterilization of minorities and handicapped persons in the United States begun in the early 1900s. By the 1970s there was an entire Indian Health Services division that had sterilized more than 42\% of the Native American female childbearing population.\textsuperscript{18} If this, in addition to the forced seclusion, removal of rights and the tragic reduction of the Native American population from between 9 and 18 million in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century to 237,000 in 1900, is not genocide, it is difficult to imagine what could be.\textsuperscript{19}

Yet, no individual or agency has ever been held responsible for the transgressions against the Native American population.\textsuperscript{20} That is not to say, however, that no actions have been taken. In 1946, the United States held an Indian Claims Commission to ensure that the Native Americans received just reparations for the expulsions over the centuries. Because the United States was largely unapologetic, however, many see this as an

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{17} Glauner, \textit{Need for Accountability and Reparation}, 942.
\textsuperscript{18} Glauner, \textit{Need for Accountability and Reparation}, 939.
\textsuperscript{20} Glauner, \textit{Need for Accountability and Reparation}, 936.
\end{flushleft}
attempt to quickly cover up the past in light of the discoveries occurring across Europe after World War II.\textsuperscript{21} In 1978, the Indian Welfare Act ended the policy of transferring Indian children to boarding school, acknowledging the injustices that such a policy had created. The Indian Child Welfare Act created at the same time sought to prevent future transfers and to put adoption procedures in place to help re-assimilate taken Native American children into tribes.\textsuperscript{22}

Throughout the 20th Century, Native Americans and their tribes slowly regained their rights to sovereignty and of citizenship in the United States. In September 2000, on the 175th anniversary of the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ creation, the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs admitted that the problems that plague Native American societies today stem largely from the Bureau’s actions in the past. His speech also included a formal apology for its role in the crimes.\textsuperscript{23} Despite this, albeit slight, progress, in my experience the horrific treatment of the Native Americans is still largely not taught in schools or included in textbooks. If it is, it is often minimized to the Trail of Tears and Battle of Wounded Knee and “Conflict with Native Americans” is often couched in language about needing space for settlers. The crimes of the 20th Century are almost completely ignored and instead Indian-United States relations are portrayed as positive with the regaining of rights and achievement of reparations.\textsuperscript{24}

While several individual tribes did receive reparations for the land that was appropriated from them, there has been no reparations effort made by the government

\textsuperscript{21}Glauner, Need for Accountability and Reparation, 936.
\textsuperscript{22} Glauner, Need for Accountability and Reparation, 943.
\textsuperscript{23} Glauner, Need for Accountability and Reparation, 953-4.
\textsuperscript{24} Information based on America: Pathways to the Present, eds. Andrew Cayton, Elisabeth Israels Perry, Linda Reed and Allan M. Winkler (Needham, MA: Prentice Hall, 2003).
that would cover all appropriations, relocations and sterilization.\textsuperscript{25} It bears repeating that the United States government will not admit to criminal responsibility and will not prosecute the organizations that performed these deeds.\textsuperscript{26} For almost a century the world has looked to the United States as the most advanced, most civilized country on earth. Yet, we refuse to come to terms with the atrocities of our past in any meaningful way. For us, perhaps the process of German \textit{Vergangenheitsbewältigung} would be a useful model for establishing a new identity for our nation both internally and within the world in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.

\textbf{Turkey and the Armenians}

During World War I, the Ottoman Empire committed terrible atrocities against many minority populations under its domain. Particularly notable were the crimes committed against the Armenian population. In April 1915, the government began deporting Armenians from their homes and shipping them towards the front lines, sometimes leaving them directly behind the battle lines. There were no real plans laid for caring for the deportees or ensuring that the reached their resettlement destinations.\textsuperscript{27} The ultimate result were the deaths of almost 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman troops as a result of starvation, beatings and shootings.\textsuperscript{28} If this was not enough, Armenian property was stolen by the Ottoman government and troops and redistributed

to the majority population in the hopes of creating a Muslim bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{29} The general historical opinion today is that the crimes committed against the Armenians unquestionably constitute genocide.\textsuperscript{30}

Following the war, the new government formed in 1918 pinned the war crimes on the Unionist party, the leaders of which had fled following the war. The hope of the new government was that by blaming the exiled Unionist party, Turkey as a nation would be freed from criminal burden.\textsuperscript{31} In the years following the war, in a much different scenario than we have seen, the press and deputies in Parliament sought the punishment of those who were responsible for the genocide: the Unionist party.\textsuperscript{32} In fact, the Ottoman government itself, prior to its dissolution, ordered war crimes trials to be held beginning in November 1918. This was not, however, in any way an admission of guilt or a way of reconciling with the crimes. Rather, the trials were held in the hope that the Ottoman Empire would receive a more favorable treatment at the Paris Peace conference. Unsurprisingly, after the conference ended and the Treaty of Sèvres was signed in 1920, the trials were disbanded by the Turkish nationalists.\textsuperscript{33}

When Turkey was established as a sovereign nation in October 1923 the official Turkish position remained disappointing. The government stated that there was no genocide, that the death of between 300,000 and 600,000 Armenians was regrettable but unintended.\textsuperscript{34} They claimed that the Armenians posed a danger to the army and therefore had to be removed; their deaths were simply a tragic result of a necessity for the war.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 245.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 246 – 248.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Akcam, \textit{A Shameful Act}, 10.
\end{itemize}
There has therefore been not just nearly complete silence and a failure to achieve or even attempt any type of dealing with this past in Turkey, but the government has actively sought to teach a different version of history than that which actually occurred. The unique problem in Turkey is that the Turkish nationalists responsible for creating the Republic of Turkey are the same people responsible for the Armenian genocide. This has had two primary effects. The first is that, to protect their own position, they have obviously attempted to make open conversation about the genocide difficult. Second, in Turkey these people are honored as heroes for achieving independence from the allied occupiers. To implicate them in this terrible genocide would threaten the very foundation of Turkish national identity.\textsuperscript{36}

Even as recently as 2007, the Turks have reinforced their position on the Armenian genocide. In this particular case, they threatened to withdraw their support for American troops in Iraq if the House Committee on Foreign Affairs in the United States passed a resolution that condemned the genocide.\textsuperscript{37} There seems to be no question that Turkey has not in any way come to terms with its past. For a democratic nation seeking full acceptance into the European Union, however, this amnesia about the past that Turkey continues to exhibit is unacceptable. Until Turkey really struggles with this issue and faces up to the term genocide and the realities of its crimes against the Armenians, it will never establish its identity as a true democracy.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36} Akcam, A Shameful Act, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{38} Akcam, A Shameful Act, 13.
German Memory in the 21st Century

Though I ended my discussion of the Denkmalstreit in 1999 as the government approached the final vote on the memorial’s design, the conversation over the memorial and Holocaust memory has not ended. In keeping with the Germans’ forward progress in coming to terms with their past, the completion of the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas has allowed Germany to look beyond just the Nazi past of the war years. While the other nations I have briefly discussed have not found a way to deal with the issue of their own crimes, in 2007 the German Federal Crime Office started an investigation into its founders – men with a past in the Nazi Stutzstaffel (SS). In another capacity, the city of Munich is thinking specifically in terms of how to teach the coming generations, Germany’s future, about the past, knowing they have no direct connection to the Nazi past.

In fact, the German education system has really brought the issue of teaching about the Nazi past and the Holocaust to a fore; it has been institutionalized. According to The New York Times, “the Holocaust remains a subject taught as a singular event and obligation here, and Germans still seem to grapple almost eagerly with their own historic guilt and shame.” Despite concerns about increased apathy among the younger generations, there are counter reports that suggest the younger generations are engaging with the subject of the Holocaust enthusiastically through the medium of education. As I have shown in Chapter One, the Denkmalstreit indicated the hope of intellectuals and politicians for younger generations to move beyond guilt for their past to having a sense

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of responsibility in the world because of their past. *The New York Times* reporting from Germany suggests that this is precisely how the younger Germans are viewing the issue of the Holocaust contemporarily.\(^{43}\)

Overall, the Germans seem to be making good on the goals they set for themselves during the Denkmalstreit. Germany has begun to redefine itself to a point where German society can feel pride once again, for at least its current state of being. Education about the Nazi crimes and the feeling of responsibility to achieve the “nie wieder” (never again) throughout the world resounds among the younger generations. The completion of the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas has not only occurred, but so far has done anything but quell discussion about the Holocaust. An even more telling testament to progress is that the Bundestag’s Minister of Culture Bernd Neumann announced in January 2008 that construction would begin on two monuments in the center of Berlin, one for the Sinti and Roma and another for Gays and Lesbians killed in the Holocaust.\(^{44}\) Amidst this optimism, however, are growing concerns about the rising radical right in some areas of Germany that have won seats in local parliaments though not enough to have a presence in the Bundestag. In terms of this project, the most visible signs of the radical right have come in the way of Swastika graffiti found on the DEJE as recently as February 2008.\(^ {45}\)

This issue of the waxing radical right-wing is one that Germans will certainly have to struggle with in the coming years. As a full-fledged democracy, there is a limit to which free speech and political parties can be stifled. Yet, at what point does this conflict with Germany’s self-proclaimed responsibility to promoting peace, freedom and justice

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in the world? Already Germans have taken this issue of responsibility to mean engaging in discussions about historical responsibility with regard to actions in Kosovo in the late 1990s. More recently it has come up in terms of the presence of German troops in Afghanistan and, along with the rest of the world, in the question of the Iraq War.

Another interesting way that this issue has represented itself is in terms of the growing Turkish population in Berlin and Germany overall. Currently, Turks account for 24.2% of the non-German population in Berlin. In light of the case I presented about Turkish memory of the Armenian genocide, I believe this opens up a whole new area for exploration. The question of how the feeling of German responsibility to the world is affected by the strong presence of the Turks in its capital is one worth considering. It seems to me that watching how this growing Turkish population influences the discussion about the memory of the Holocaust in Germany and about dealing with genocide in general. So far, Germany has shown itself to be exemplary in coming to terms with its past. It remains to be seen whether this will continue into the future.

Appendix A
Glossary of Key Terms

_Akademie der Künste_: the Academy of Art in Berlin that serves as the exclusive arts council for the federal government.

_Berliner Senat_: The lower house of parliament for the state of Berlin.

_Bundeskanzler(in):_ The federal Chancellor of Germany elected by a majority of the _Bundestag_.

_Bundeskanzleramt_: The Office of the Federal Chancellor located in the _Regierungsviertel_ near the _Bundestag_.

_Bundespresseamt_: The Office of the Federal Press which holds all of the press conferences for the federal government.

_Bundesregierung_: The federal government of Germany.

_Bundesrepublik_: Federal Republic, as in of Germany.

_Bundestag_: The lower house of the German parliament, which meets in the _Reichstag_.

_Bundestagspräsident(in):_ President of the German _Bundestag_, second in importance to the Chancellor and voted into power by all members of the _Bundestag_.

_Bus Stop!:_ one of the third-prize winners of the first artistic competition designed by Frieder Schnock and Renata Stih. It consisted of red public transportation buses that would bring visitors to _KZ_ sites around Germany and was favored by the public.

_Denkmal_: a memorial, usually taking the form of a monument to an historical event.

_Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas_: Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe.

_Denkmalsstreit_: debate over the _Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas_.

_Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR):_ the communist government of East Germany during the Cold War, from 1949-1990.

_Deutsches Historisches Museum (DHM):_ the national Museum of German History located in Berlin.

_die Endlösung_: the final solution to the “Jewish question,” the problem, according to anti-semites, of what to do with the Jews – with the subtext of how to get rid of them.
Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma (DKSR):
Documentation and Culture Center of the German Sinti and Roma, a cultural center and a place of memory created by the ZSR.

Dokumentations Zentrum: documentation center, a place in which information about a subject can be found and explored, typically associated with a museum or memorial.

Feld der Erinnerung: Field of Memory, the title of Peter Eisenman and Richard Serra’s original design proposal for the 1997 design competition.

Findungskommission: Findings Commission, appointed by the government to investigate and give a report on specific subject, like what to do with the land on which the former Gestapo headquarters stood.

Förderkreis für die Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden (FEDJE): Society for the Promotion of Building a Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, the larger public organization that developed out of Perspektive Berlin.

Führerbunker: Leader’s Bunker, the bunker in which Hitler is believed to have committed suicide in 1945.

Gedenkstätte: Place of Memory, usually an historical location that has been turned into a museum or research center open to visitors.

Gestapo-Gelände: Located in Berlin next to Potsdamer Platz, this piece of land was where the headquarters of the Nazi Gestapo once stood. In the late 1980s there was a Findings Commission to determine what to do with that land, which was when Perspektive Berlin first made a proposal for a permanent memorial. The Findings Commission chose to go with the proposal by Real Museum to put a documentation center on the location. That documentation center is now the exhibit Topography of Terror.

Historikerstreit: The Historians Debate, a debate that occurred in the 1980s through newspaper articles and publications between historians who argued about how Germany should deal with the Holocaust and Nazi times.

Judenfrage: Jewish question, the Nazi question of how to get rid of the European Jews.

Kaiser: Emperor.

Konzentrationslager (KZ): Concentration camp.

Kristallnacht: Night of Broken Glass, the 1938 attack by Sturmabteilung on Jewish businesses and synagogues.

Kultursenator: Senator of Cultural Affairs, in the Berlin Senate.
**Land Berlin**: The State of Berlin, or Berlin’s regional government.

**Leo Baeck Institute**: A research, lecture and exhibition center about the history and culture of German-Speaking Jewry.

**Mahnmal**: A memorial usually of a negative historical event, meant to convey a warning message to the future.

**Mauer-im-Kopf**: wall in the head, a term used to describe the psychological phenomenon in Berlin which proposes that Berliners continue to feel the effects of physical separation despite the wall being gone.

**Mein Kampf**: My Struggle, Adolf Hitler’s autobiography and the text in which he first laid out his racist, anti-Semitic ideology.

**Ministergärten**: The Garden of the former Reichskanzlei located near the Tiergarten, Parisier Platz and the Brandenburg Gate. This is where the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas is currently located.

**Mitglied des deutschen Bundestag (MdB)**: Member of the German Bundestag, elected every four years coming either through their party or by their constituency.

**Neue Wache**: a memorial built in 1993 to the Victims of War and Tyranny consisting of a Pieta sculpture by Käthe Kollwitz.

**Nürnberger Gesetze**: The 1935 Nuremberg Laws enacted by Hitler and the Nazi regime, which specified that a Jew was anyone with 3 or more grandparents who did not have Christian baptismal certificates, prevented Jews from marrying with other Germans and declared the Jews to not be citizens of the Reich.

**Perspektive Berlin**: Originally organized as a citizens initiative to support building a permanent memorial on the Prinz-Albrecht Palace, former Gestapo headquarters. It was started by Lea Rosh and Eberhard Jäckel in 1988. However, after the opening of the provisional documentation on the Gestapo-Gelände, their activities were integrated into the new FEDJE in 1989, which then sought a Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

**Pieta**: A Christian symbol depicting the Virgin Mary holding her dead son, Jesus. The similarity of Käthe Kollwitz’s “Mother with Dead Son” to the well-known Pieta in the Neue Wache was an issue of controversy.

**Platz der Republik**: The empty plaza that is in the middle of the Reichstag, the Bundeskanzleramt and other federal government buildings. At one point, this was a proposed location for the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.
**Potzdamer Platz:** Once the cultural downtown center of Berlin, it was destroyed during World War II and was rebuilt as the economic powerhouse of Berlin.

**Reich:** Empire.

**Reichskanzlei:** Reich Chancellery, the building where Hitler lived and worked as Chancellor while in Berlin. It is located next to Parisier Platz, the Brandenburg Gate between the Tiergarten and Potsdamer Platz, and stood above the bunker in which Hitler committed suicide.

**Reichstag:** The building that houses the Bundestag, Germany’s lower house of Parliament. It is located in the Regierungsviertel and bears the famous inscription “Dem deutschen Volke” or “to the German People.”

**Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen:** Senate Committee for Building and Living, a committee of the Berliner Senat in charge of all art projects in public spaces at the time of the Denkmalstreit.

**Senatsverwaltung für Kulterelle Angelegenheiten:** Senate Committee for Cultural Affairs, a committee of the Berliner Senat in charge of all artistic and cultural projects in Berlin.

**Sinti and Roma:** an ethnic group often referred to as Gypsies that was persecuted on an social and later a racial basis by the Nazis.

**Steinplatz:** a square in Berlin in which the federal government built a monument to the victims of National Socialism in 1953.

**Stele:** concrete columns, used in the chosen design for the Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas.

**Sturmbabteilung:** the Nazi paramilitary organization.

**Tiergarten:** The giant area of forest located in the heart of Berlin. It is full of walking spaces and monuments to important figures from German cultural history.

**Topography of Terror:** Built in 1993 on the grounds of the former Gestapo headquarters, this exhibit once started as an outdoor temporary documentation center of the rise of the Nazi party and the control they held over Germany. The exhibit will now be housed in a permanent building, pending its construction.

**Unter den Linden:** Berlin’s main street, which runs down the center of Berlin-Mitte from East to West. Along the street, many of Berlin’s historical sites can be found including the Neú Wache and the Brandenburg Gate.
Vergangenheitsbewältigung: a term commonly used to describe the process of the German nation coming to terms with its Nazi past.

Volk: the German people.

Wehrmacht: The German army, navy and airforce during the Third Reich.

Weisensee: A Jewish cemetery located in East Berlin and is the second largest Jewish cemetery in Germany.

Yad Vashem: The official Holocaust memorial of Israel built in 1953 and consisting of a museum, educational centers, archives, memorial chambers, outdoor exhibits and art galleries.

Zentralrat der deutschen Sinti und Roma (ZSR): Central Council of the German Sinti and Roma, a rights group based in Heidelberg, Germany and headed by Romani Rose.

Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (ZJD): Central Council of the Jews in Germany.
Appendix B
Glossary of Key Figures

**Ambros, Peter:** A German historian.

**Assheuer, Thomas:** Journalist for *Die Zeit.*

**Assmann, Aleida:** (1947-) Renowned German cultural scholar.

**Avidan, Igal:** Journalist

**Bartetzko, Dieter:** Architecture critic for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

**Bastian, Heiner:** Art Scholar.

**Beaucamp, Eduard:** Art Critic.

**Beck, Volker:** (1960-) Member of the German *Bundestag, Die Grünen.* He served as their speaker for Legal Affairs from 1994-2002. His leadership in the *Bundestag* has resulted in the decision to erect a memorial to murdered homosexuals.

**Boettiger, Helmut:** (1956-) Features editor for the *Frankfurter Rundschau.*

**Brandt, Willy:** (1913 – 1992) *Bundeskanzler, SPD* from 1969-1974, after which he was the leader of the *SPD* in the *Bundestag* until 1987. His best known legacy was for his program of *Ostpolitik,* with which he tried to improve relations with East Germany and the Soviet Union.

**Braun, Joachim:**

**Broder, Henryk:** (1946-) Author and journalist for *Der Spiegel* and *Der Tagesspiegel.*

**Broszat, Martin:** (1926-1989) German historian and Professor at the University of Köln who argued against Ernst Nolte during the *Historikerstreit.*

**Bubis, Ignatz:** (1927-1999) 6th president of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland (ZJD)* from 1992 -1999 and tended to side with the *FDP* politically.

**Buddensieg, Tilmann:** Art scholar.

**Conradi, Peter:** Member of the German *Bundestag, SPD,* from 1972 – 1998 and served as President of the *Architektenkammer,* the Chamber of Architecture responsible for architectural issues throughout Germany, from 1999-2004.


**Ehrlich, Ernst Ludwig:** (1921-2007) German Jewish philosopher.
Eisenman, Peter: (1932-) American architect who, in combination with Richard Serra and later Michael Naumann, devised the winning proposal for the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.

Fischer, Fritz: (1908-1999) German historian who was one of the first to challenge the conservative historian perspective that the Third Reich was an aberration from German history.

Flierl, Bruno: (1927-) Architect critic and historian.

Freudenberg, Günther: Professor of philosophy and politician.

Friedrich Wilhelm II: (1744-1797) King of Prussia from 1786-1797 greatly devoted to the arts and responsible for building the Brandenburg Gate.


Gerz, Jochen: (1940-) A German artist and one of the 25 artists invited to participate in the 1997 design competition. His proposal, “Warum?” (Why?), was one of the four finalists for the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.

Goldhagen, Daniel: (1959-) American political scientist and former Harvard Professor. He is best known for his controversial book, Hitler’s Willing Executioners (1996), which argued that ordinary Germans knew about and supported the Nazi extermination policies.

Grass, Günter: (1927-) German author and play-write and an active supporter of the SPD. Much of his work has been devoted to the German need to come to terms with its Nazi past.

Habermas, Jürgen: (1929-) A German philosopher and sociologist. He was first in the public eye when he began the Historikerstreit by attacking the arguments of historians Ernst Nolte, Michael Stürmer and Andreas Hillgruber in Die Zeit.


Heuss, Heriburt: leader of the Zentralrat der deutschen Sinti und Roma (ZSR).

Hildebrand, Klaus: (1941-) German historian who sided with the conservative historians during the Historikerstreit.

**Hirsch, Dr. Burkhard:** (1930-) Member of the German Bundestag, FDP, and served as its Vice-President from 1994-1998.

**Hofmann, Werner:** A German art historian.

**Hoheisel, Horst:** (1944-) A German artist whose proposal to destroy the Brandenburg Gate in order to commemorate the Holocaust memorial received a great deal of attention.

**Jäckel, Eberhard:** (1929-) A noted German historian and professor of Third Reich history, closely aligned with the SPD. He became well-known during the Historikerstreit in which he stood opposed to the conservative historians and better known for working with Lea Rosh to build the Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.

**Jakob-Marks, Christine:** An architect from Berlin and co-winner of the second artistic competition with a design for an enormous gravestone with the names of the 4.5 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust engraved on it.

**Jens, Walter:** (1923-) From 1989-1997 he was President of the Akademie der Künste.

**Jessen, Jens:** (1955-) Editor of the Features section for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung from 1988-1994, he served the same role at the Berliner Zeitung from 1996-1999, and at Die Zeit since 2000.

**Kittsteiner, Heinz Dieter:** German historian and Professor at Frankfurt University.

**Kleihues, Josef Paul:** (1933-2004) A German architect who had a major influence on Berlin’s reconstruction post-reunification. He also sat on the jury that decided upon Daniel Libeskind’s design for the Judäisches Museum Berlin.

**Kocka, Jürgan:** (1941-) A German historian who sided with Jürgen Habermas and other liberal historians in the Historikerstreit.

**Kohl, Helmut:** (1930-) Bundeskanzler, CDU, from 1982 – 1998. He was the Chancellor throughout the majority of the Denkmalstreit.

**Kollwitz, Käthe:** (1867-1947) German artist and sculptress, renowned for her portrayals of the injustices of the world. Most significantly, a model of her sculpture Mother with Dying Son was used in the Neue Wache.

**Konrad, Gyorgy:** (1933-) Hungarian essayist and journalist, also became the first non-German president of the Akademie der Künste.

**Korn, Salomon:** (1943-) Respected German architect, Professor at the University of Heidelberg, leader of the Jewish Society of Frankfurt am Main, and Vice-President of the Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland.
**Koselleck, Dr. Reinhart:** (1923-2006) One of the most influential German historians of the 20th century.


**Kudielka, Robert:** (1945-) A German art scholar and a member of the Akademie der Künste since 1997.

**Kugler, Anita:** A German author.

**Kurtze, Gerhard:** Former president of the Borsenverein, the German Association of Publishers.

**Lackmann, Thomas:** (1954-) Editor of Der Tagesspiegel since 1991 and the artistic director of the Jewish Culture Day in Berlin in 2004.

**Lehming, Malte:** Journalist for Der Tagesspiegel.

**Liebeskind, Daniel:** (1946-) A Jewish-Polish-American architect who is best known for his designs for the Judaiisches Museum Berlin and the World Trade Center site. He also submitted a proposal called Steinatem for the 1997 design competition, which became a finalist but was ultimately not selected.

**Martenstein, Harald:** (1953-) A German author and journalist, first for Der Tagesspiegel from 1988-1997 and then for Die Zeit from 2002 onwards.

**Meier, Christian:** (1929-) A German historian and Professor at the University of Munich.

**Moses-Kraus, Peter:** A German-Jewish journalist.

**Nachama, Andreas:** (1951-) A German-Jewish journalist and Rabbi, best known for his role as the Director of the Topography of Terror exhibit since 1987. He was also the Artistic Director of Jewish Culture Day in Berlin from 1992-1999 and from 1997-2001 was the Leader of the Jewish Society of Berlin.

**Naumann, Julia:** German author.

**Naumann, Michael:** (1941-) Served as Editor for Die Zeit and became the Kulturminister, SPD, in 1998 until 2001. His proposal for Die Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas to include a documentation and research center, a library and a classroom section came after the 1997 design competition but was integrated into Peter Eisenman’s winning proposal.
**Nolte, Ernst:** (1923-) A German historian whose article “Vergangenheit: die nicht vergehen will” argued that the Holocaust arose from a Bolshevik precedent and was therefore comparable to other historical events. This conservative position provided the foundation for the *Historikerstreit.*

**Rahamimoff, Arie:** Israeli architect and urbanist who participated in the three-day colloquium regarding *Der Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas.*

**Reichel, Peter:** (1942-) A German political scientist.

**Reinecke, Stefan:** (1959-) Editor of *Der Tagesspiegel* and author.

**Reuter, Edzard:** (1928-) Mayor of Berlin from 1948-1953 and CEO of Daimler-Benz from 1987 – 1995 and proponent of the *Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas.*

**Riedl, Joachim:** Office Director of the Vienna office of *Die Zeit.*

**Riedle, Gabriele:** German writer.

**Roloff-Momin, Ulrich:** (1939-) Served as the *Kultursenator, FDP* in the *Berliner Senat* from 1991 – 1996 and played a large role in the government’s decisions regarding the *Denkmal für die Ermordeten Juden Europas.*

**Ronti, Dieter:** Director of the *Kunstmuseum Bonn* and one of the five jurists for the 1997 design competition.

**Rose, Romani:** (1946-) Director of the *Zentralrat Deutscher Sinti und Roma (ZSR).*

**Rosh, Lea:** (1936-) A German television journalist and co-founder of the movement to create a central memorial for the Holocaust, along with Eberhard Jäckel.

**Rürrup, Reinhard:** Professor of Modern History at the *Technical University Berlin (TU-Berlin)* and author.

**Schmalenbach, Werner:** (1920-) A German culture historian who from 1962-1990 was the Director of the *Kunstsammlung Nordhein-Westfalen.*

**Schmid, Thomas:** (1945-) A German journalist and Chief Editor of *Die Welt.*

**Schneider, Oscar:** (1927-) An *MdB-CSU* from 1969-1994 and from 1991-1994 was the Cultural-political Speaker for the *CDU/CSU* faction.

**Schneider, Richard Chaim:** German author and spokesman for the Jewish community.

**Schnick, Frieder:** co-designer of the Bus Stop! proposal along with Renata Stih.
Schoeps, Julius: (1942-) A German historian.

Schröder, Gerhard: (1944-) Served as Bundeskanzler, SPD, from 1998-2005.

Schröder, Richard: A German Professor of Theology and Philosophy.

Schuller, Konrad: Journalist for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Schulz, Bernhard: A German writer.

Schulze-Rohr, Jakob: A Berliner architect and one of the original members of Perspektive Berlin.

Serra, Richard: (1939-) An American sculptor and artist who submitted the proposal “Feld der Erinnerung” together with Peter Eisenman. He later gave full rights to the proposal to Eisenman and removed himself from the competition.

Shalev, Avner: Director of Israel’s Yad Vashem.

Stih, Renata: A co-designer of the Bus Stop! proposal along with Frieder Schnock.

Stölzl, Christoph: From 1987-1999 he served as the Director of the Deutscher Historiker Museum and from 1999-2000 he was Deputy Editor-in-Chief and Head of the Features Section of Die Welt.

Stürmer, Michael: (1938-) A conservative German historian whose 1986 essay Land Ohne Geschichte published in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung was one of the three that provided the foundation for the Historikerstreit. After 1989, he became chief correspondent for Die Welt.

Süssmuth, Rita: (1937-) From 1988-1998 she served as Bundestagspräsidentin, CDU.

Szeemann, Harald: (1933-2005) Director of the Kunsthalle in Bern, Switzerland and an art critic.


Ungers, Simon: (1957-2006) An architect from Cologne and co-winner of the first artistic competition with a design that projected the names of concentration camps onto the ground with sunlight.

von Braun, Christina: (1944-) A German cultural scholar and author.
Walser, Martin: (1927-) A German writer famous for his speech in which he suggested that the lessons of the Holocaust were being misused to make demands for German shame. This immediately sparked controversy with Ignatz Bubis, beginning the Walser-Bubis debates of 1998-1999.

Weinmiller, Gesine: A German architect who proposed the Davidstern design for the 1997 memorial design competition.

Wolf, Christa: (1929-) German author, famous for her work from a former DDR perspective and a supporter of the DEJE.

Wolffsohn, Michael: (1947-) An Israeli-born German historian typically aligned with the conservative perspective.

Young, James: A Professor of English and Judaic studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His body of academic work focuses on how architecture and memory are connected to create national identity. He also served as one of the jurists for the 1997 design competition.
Appendix D
Publications and Political Parties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mayor:</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mayor:</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Party</th>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>January: Perspektive Berlin led by Lea Rosh makes the first suggestion for a memorial to the murdered Jews on the ToT site. It is supported by Willy Brandt, Walter Jens, Günter Grass and Christa Wolf. February: Berlin SPD led by Wolfgang Nagel suggests building a national Holocaust memorial instead of a national history museum. April: Romani Rose makes first criticism of a memorial to only one victim group. New Berlin Mayor Walter Momper. Red/Green Senat supports Perspektive Berlin. October: The finding commission to decide how to use the ToT site rejects Perspektive Berlin’s memorial proposal. November: FEDJE is founded taking on</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>January/February: <em>FEDJE</em> suggests building the memorial on the grounds of the former <em>Reichskanzlei</em>. &lt;br&gt; July: Cultural Committee of the Berlin House of Representatives suggests the <em>FEDJE</em> find a less spectacular location. &lt;br&gt; October: East and West Germany are formally reunited.</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>March: ZdSR proposes a memorial for the murdered Sinti and Roma in Berlin to the <em>Berliner Senat</em>. &lt;br&gt; September: Berlin Mayor Walter Momper guarantees that in deciding whether to build a memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe, they will also consider the proposal for memorial to the murdered Sinti and Roma.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>January: Founding of the Topography of Terrors foundation with the support of the <em>Land Berlin</em> and <em>Bundesrepublik. Haus der Wansee-Konferenz</em> opens as a museum. &lt;br&gt; February: Two memorials for murdered and persecuted <em>MdB’s</em> are unveiled. &lt;br&gt; March: (10th) Federal Minister of the Interior Rudolf Seiters, in conversation with the <em>FEDJE</em>, gives federal</td>
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support to building a central Holocaust memorial in the *Ministergärten* – victims to be remembered will be decided later.

**April:** (24th) The Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Senate Committee for Cultural Affairs (*Land Berlin*) and the *FEDJE* agree to build an exclusively Jewish memorial and to its location on the grounds of the *Reichskanzlei* in the *Ministergärten*.

**May:** Tension between the *ZdSR*, *FEDJE* and the *SJD* increases after the press announces an exclusively Jewish memorial.

**July:** The Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Senate Committee for Cultural Affairs (*Land Berlin*) agree to build two memorials, one for the Jews and one for the Sinti and Roma.

**October:** (13th) The *Berliner Senat* votes for an *MMJE* and *MMSR*. The sites remain undecided.

**November:** (27th) *Berliner Senat* approves the location of the *Ministergärten* for the *MMJE*.

1993 **June:** the memorial to the Jews in the *Bayerischen* neighborhood of Berlin by Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock becomes public.

**November:** the *Neue Wache* opens on *Unter den Linden*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Mayor: Eberhard Diepgen, <em>CDU</em></th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>From</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>The Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Senate Committee for Cultural</td>
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<td>12/1990 - 10/1994</td>
<td>CDU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Affairs (<em>Land Berlin</em>) and the <em>FEDJE</em> agree to build an exclusively</td>
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<td>12th Voting Period</td>
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<td>Jewish memorial and to its location on the grounds of the *Reichskanzlei</td>
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<td>(1st Reunification vote)</td>
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<td>in the <em>Ministergärten</em>.</td>
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<td><em>CDU/CSU/FDP</em></td>
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<td>May</td>
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<td>press announces an exclusively Jewish memorial.</td>
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<td>July</td>
<td>The Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Senate Committee for</td>
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<td>Cultural Affairs (<em>Land Berlin</em>) agree to build two memorials, one for</td>
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<td>the Jews and one for the Sinti and Roma.</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>remain undecided.</td>
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<td>for the <em>MMJE</em>.</td>
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</table>

10/1982 - 10/1998 *Dr. Helmut Kohl* *CDU*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>Building Senator Wolfgang Nagel and Culture Senator Ulrich Roloff-Momin suggest the area between the Reichstag and Brandenburg Gate for the MMSR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>Artistic competition for the MMJE through the Senate Committee for Building a Housing opens, supported by the Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Memorial at the KZ Aussenlager Sonnenallee opens in Berlin.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>December</td>
<td>Memorial at the KZ Columbia-Haus opens in Berlin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>(18-20th) The Jury (led by Prof. Dr. Walter Jens) of the artistic competition for the MMJE reviews 528 submissions and agrees to a second session.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>March</td>
<td>(15-16th) The Jury meets again and awards two first prizes to Simon Ungers and Christine Jakob-Marks et al. (17th) The press conference announcing the decision brings heavy criticism. Roman Herzog heads a public Foundation for the MMJE to raise money for building the memorial. A memorial concerning the Nazi book burnings opens in Berlin.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>(12th) A month-long exhibition of all artistic competition designs opens to the public.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>(8th) 50th anniversary</td>
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</table>
of Germany’s liberation from Nazism ● Ground stone laid for the new permanent Topography of Terror exhibit.

June: (7th) *Spiegelwand* memorial for the expelled Jews of Berlin-Steglitz opens in Berlin. (8th) Ignatz Bubis publicly favors Simon Ungers design for the *MMJE*, speaking out against Christine Jakob-Marks’s design. (25th) *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* vote to build Christine Jakob-Marks’s design. (26th) The *Initiative Schwulenmahnmal* proposes a memorial for the Homosexual victims. (30th) *Bundeskanzler* Kohl speaks out against building Christine Jakob-Marks’s design.

1996

January: (27th) *Bundespräsident* Roman Herzog declares “Memorial day for the Victims of National Socialism,” 51 years after the liberation of Auschwitz.

April: (24th) Berlin Senator Peter Radunski has a conversation with the *Berliner Senat*, the *Bundesregierung* and *FEDJE* in which they decide to move forward with a *MMJE* on the given location, but begin a new process.

May: (9th) The *Bundestag* engages in its first debate over the *MMJE*.

August: (30th) *Bund, Land Berlin*
**Berlin** and **FEDJE** agree to a multi-stage colloquium on the location, content and meaning of the **MMJE**.

**November:** The **Berliner Senat** votes to remove the Topography of Terror exhibit, but revokes the decision after massive protests.

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>(10th) The first colloquium meets with the topic “Why does Germany need the Memorial?”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>February</td>
<td>(14th) The second colloquium meets with the topic: “The Location, its historical and political context, its future involvement in the city space”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April</td>
<td>(11th) The third colloquium meets with the topic: “Typology and Iconography of the Memorial, Way to Realization”. (18th) Peter Radunski speaks for Bund, Land Berlin and FEDJE in saying that a findings commission will be created that will name 9 artists to create new MMJE designs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June</td>
<td>(17th) The Findings Commission [Prof. Dr. Werner Hofmann, Prof. Josef Paul Kleihues, Prof. Dr. Dieter Ronte, Prof. Dr. Christoph Stölzl and Prof. Dr. James E. Young] decide to invite 16 artists/architects and the 9 prize-winners from the first artistic competition to submit designs for a second design competition.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13th Vote
Mayor: Eberhard Diepgen, **CDU**
Coalition: **CDU/SPD**

13th Voting Period
**CDU/CSU/FDP**
**October/November:**
(31st/14-15th) The Findings Commission, *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* review the 19 design proposals. The Findings Commission votes for the designs from Eisenman/Serra and from Weinmiller. The *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* vote for the designs from Gerz and from Libeskind. These become the four design options.

**December:** (11th) A two-month long public exhibition opens of all the submitted proposals. The four chosen design teams give presentations to the *Bundestagspräsidentin*, Members of all *Bundestag* factions, representatives of the *Bund, Land Berlin* and *FEDJE* and art critics over the same two-month period.

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<td>Mayor:</td>
<td>13th Voting</td>
<td>13th Voting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eberhard</td>
<td>Period</td>
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<td>Diepgen,</td>
<td><em>CDU</em></td>
<td><em>CDU/CSU/FDP</em></td>
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<td><em>CDU/SPD</em></td>
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1998

**January:** (21st)
*Bundeskanzler* Kohl, *Bundestagspräsidentin* Süssmuth and Mayor Eberhard Diepgen meet with representatives of the *Bund, Land Berlin* and
**FEDJE.** They decide to pursue a revised version of the Eisenman/Serra proposal. (27th) The *Gleis 17* memorial at the Grunewald *Bahnhof* opens commemorating the deportation of the Jews.

**February:** Kohl and Süssmuth want a quick decision for the memorial. Diepgen wants more time. **May:** (22nd) A conversation is held between Kohl and Eisenman/Serra in which they discuss the details of reworking their proposal. **June:** (3rd) Richard Serra backs out of the Eisenman/Serra design team. **July:** The revised Eisenman proposal arrives in Berlin and is classified. (21st) Michael Naumann, designated SPD cultural representative, calls for abandoning the memorial concept. **August:** (4th) Gerz pulls out of the competition. ● The Berlin SPD wants a quick decision about the *MMJE*. (24th) Kohl and Diepgen agree to postpone the decision on the designs until after the national elections on September 27th, although they set no specific date. (26th) A three-week exhibit of the four design options, in addition to the revised Eisenman Proposal, the Libeskind model for the new Jewish Museum and the design of

<table>
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<th>13th Vote</th>
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<th>Eberhard Diepgen, CDU</th>
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<tr>
<td>Coalition:</td>
<td>CDU/SPD</td>
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</table>
the new Topography of Terror Foundation building.

**September:** (3rd) Berlin House of Representatives decides for the building of a *MMJE*, without agreeing to a design or a location.

**October:** (11th) Martin Walser speaks out against the *MMJE*. (20th) The Red/Green coalition confirms that the *MMJE* will be discussed. ● Andreas Nachama, leader of the Jewish Society of Berlin, speaks against the building of the *MMJE* and instead for the building of a University of Jewish, Catholic, Protestant and later also Islamic theology.

**November:** (24th) Diepgen speaks against the Eisenman design.

**December:** (14th) Michael Naumann proposes his design for a museum, library and research center instead of the *MMJE*.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>January</td>
<td>(17th/19th) Eisenman and Naumann present a combined design of memorial and information center at a press conference. (26th) The head of the foundation for a German Holocaust Memorial, Hans-Jürgen Hässler, supports the Naumann/ Eisenman model. Lea Rosh resigns from the foundation. (27th) <strong>Bundespräsident</strong> Roman Herzog asks for a quick decision on an <em>MMJE</em> design.</td>
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</table>

**13th Vote**
- Mayor: Eberhard Diepgen, *CDU*
- Coalition: *CDU/SPD*

**14th Vote**
- Mayor: Eberhard Diepgen, *CDU*
- 14th Voting Period
- *SPD/GP*
- 10/1998 - 11/2005
- Gerhard Schröder, *SPD*
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>(8th) The CDU publicly criticizes the Naumann/Eisenman model.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>(3rd) First hearing by the Committee for Kulture and Media in the Bundestages. (16th) The Berliner Senat, led by the CDU majority agrees to stop the competition proceedings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>(20th) 2nd Bundestages hearing occurs.</td>
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<td>June</td>
<td>(25th) Date for the final Bundestag vote on the MMJE.</td>
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<td>Eberhard Diepgen, CDU</td>
<td>14th Voting Period SPD/GP</td>
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<td>SPD</td>
<td>Gerhard Schröder</td>
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<th>10/1998 - 1/2005</th>
<th>Gerhard Schröder</th>
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<td>SPD</td>
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## Appendix D
### Publications and Political Parties

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Politics</th>
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<tr>
<td>Frankfurter Allgemeine</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Frankfurt</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suddeutsche Zeitung</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Bavaria</td>
<td>Progressive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Welt</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Die Zeit</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
<td>Liberal-Center</td>
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