

4/29/05

## FRONTLINE: A JEW AMONG THE GERMANS

RAIL/TITLE: A JEW AMONG THE GERMANS

Sixty years after the end of World War II, European trains still mark memories; good trains, bad trains, nightmarish trains with a destination marked death.

BORDER GUARDS AT THE TRAIN STATION

My train to Berlin is about to cross the Polish-German border. It was here where the war began in 1939.

LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDOW

I was 8 when the war was over. A Jewish child in Poland, I was among the few members of my family who survived the Holocaust. For all the years after the war, I've been avoiding Germany.

POV OF BERLIN STATION

Then, one day I decided to visit the land of the enemy.

GETTING OF TRAIN

I carry with me the baggage of bad memories. The German language alone strikes discord to my ear.

M. CROSSING THE STREET AT POINT CHARLIE

Germany has fully recovered from the horror of the war, at least economically.

CONSTRUCTION FROM THE S-BAHN

Berlin, destroyed by the allies in 1945, has become again the capital of united Germany, and a huge construction site.

STREETS FROM THE BUS

When I learned that the German government wanted to build a Memorial to the six million murdered Jews of Europe,

M. IN THE BUS

I found a good cover for this painful trip and put on my reporter's hat.

TRACKING ALONG THE SITE OF MEMORIAL

The Memorial will be built where Hitler's government once stood. On this no man's land, where circus troops now pitch their tents, the German government wants to erect ~~in stone~~ its ultimate apology for the crimes against the Jews.

INSIDE HOTEL

On behalf of my murdered relatives, I suppose I am the one to accept the apology.

I am staying in a small hotel run by a Jewish woman my age, who escaped Nazi Germany and hid in Denmark. Her uncle who owned this apartment was killed in the Holocaust. When I told her about my quest, she said I should stay away from this subject, ...“anti-Semitism is still alive in Germany,” she said”.

LOOKING AT SUBMISSIONS. IN HOTEL ROOM.

Looking at the entries to the architectural competition for the Memorial, I am frightened of how cold they were, with their sharp edges resembling Nazi era architecture, and their abstract symbols like the German swastika and the Star of David.

WALKING WITH GUENTHER SCHLUSCHE

**I called the city architect coordinating the project.**

*M: Where is the front of the monument? Not the side.*

*G: The Front is open to the artist's design.*

**His name is Günter Schlusche. A German baby-boomer, his father was too young to be in the war. That's comforting.**

*→ go to previous page*

CONVERSATION WITH SCHLUSCHE

*M: But the surrounding of this monument gives at the same time a message of vitality, of power that will be one of the most modern parts of Europe,*

*G: Urban life is not destructive.*

*M: Well, distracted from the monument.*

*G: No, I won't think so. I think we can deal with all of that. I think it can make it. Perhaps my expectations are too high, but I think it's possible. I have some experience with what monuments can evoke and what not. And they shouldn't, let's say, produce a feeling of guilt...*

*M: Anxiety. Anxiety. Shouldn't.*

*G: They should not do that.*

*M: Guilt, yes? No?*

*G: Yes but not too much of that, because I think guiltiness belongs to that, but not forming the only part of that is what this memorial should do.*

WALKING TO THE HOUSE OF CHRISTINE JACOB-MARKS

**The winner of the competition was Christina Jacob-Marks, a painter. She lives in a suburban villa, which once belonged to a Nazi Officer who was executed after his failed attempt to assassinate Hitler.**

CHRISTINE OPENS THE DOOR

*M: Is this is a Jewish home?*

*C: It was. My husband died. This is my colleague.*

*M: Hello.*

LIVING ROOM

**Her idea was to engrave on a monumental plate of ...**

**PICTURE OF MODEL**

**black granite the names of as many millions of murdered Jews as could be found.**

## NAMES IN GRANITE

**My first reaction is that no Jew would want to be again on a German roster.**

## CONVERSATION AT THE TABLE

*M: every name accuses a German or a visitor or public of a killing. It is extremely strong things that may lead people to avoid this place.*

*Arch: Maybe, but our intention was to give this feeling. To memento give the chance to feel like that.*

*C: Maybe the shock is so big that they have the intention these things shouldn't happen in any case whatever.*

*M: so it's a perpetuation of guilt.*

**I was not the only one with misgivings about this design. The German Chancellor decided that this project was not good enough, and announced a second competition, this time limited to invited artists.**

## TRACKING ALONG THE SITE

**A man who studied Holocaust Memorials around the world once wrote that the best thing for the Germans would be to never build THIS Memorial, but keep discussing it into eternity.**

## IN THE CAR WITH JAMES YOUNG

**Ironically, he's the very man the German government has turned to for advice. Dr. James Young is an American who's come to Berlin to be a judge for the second design competition.** *He soon explains to me his task to*

*Y: The Government moving back to Berlin cannot move here innocently. It has to move back with the reminder of what happened the last time to government was located in Berlin. The last time being during the Nazi Reich. Countries don't build monuments to their crimes. In America, we have not built monuments to the genocide of the native Americans*

*M: Exactly.*

*Y: We don't... That's not how countries rebuild themselves. I mean, that's why these two questions come up over and over again. How do perpetrators, former perpetrators, mourn their victims? It doesn't happen. And how do you reunite a divided country, in this case a divided city, on the bedrock memory of national crimes?*

## WITH JAMES YOUNG AT KRISTALNACHT SITE

**James Young takes me to the place where a few years before I was born the Holocaust started. Here, the Nazis burned Jewish books and that night Jewish stores were vandalized.**

## SHELVES

**Young wanted to show me how an artist commemorated it—underground—a library with empty bookshelves. He likes this kind of small memorials that people encounter by chance, forcing reflection.**

## WITH KARAVAN ON THE SITE

**The next day I meet Dani Karavan, an Israeli sculptor, invited to be part of the second Memorial design competition.**

*I NEED TO TRANSLATE IT*

K: Look, you see here. Those people will look from the window when I will come here to stay here and to meditate with my feelings. Here the embassy will be. Here will be another bank.

M: they will be too comfortable. You don't want to...because they will be too comfortable.

K: I don't know what they will be. I don't care about them, because I will not buy apartment there. That's not my problem. It's their problem. I will stay here. I will come here, to see here...I will come with my children and I will come with my friends and I'll stay here, and somebody is looking at me from the window, how I behave.

M: And say look at this Jew here. Look at look at him.

K: Maybe with...

M: Binoculars, right?

K:...to see exactly how I'm crying, or not crying, if I'm laughing or not laughing, so I said to myself, okay, It's not for me.

**At first he didn't want to build anything.**

K: The site is kind of a very strange form. So I look <sup>star</sup> at this <sup>then ed</sup> ~~said~~, and I said okay look. There is a ~~image~~ <sup>site again</sup> David here. It's there. So I said I have a Magen David, what do I do with Magen David. Oh, maybe I will put flowers inside. yellow flowers. And the moment I had the yellow flowers, everything was clear for me. And then I had to find a way...I cut it here, and I cut it here. I make the possibility for people to go around. To come here. The flowers will be here [pokes ground with stick].

**HE IS DRAWING IN THE GROUND**

K: They will look at me from those buildings...I look at the site: start of David. I will fill it with flowers.

**Very soon the image of flowers will be shattered.**

**FIGHT WITH THE GUARD**

**The security guard interrupts our filming, telling us that without letting him know the city could not allow us to be here. It comes as a shock to us.**

**KARAVAN TO M:**

K: You see... <sup>comments Karavan</sup> because of those people. They will not let it to be built. Because they don't want it to be built. There will be another discussion, another competition. There will always there will be somebody who will be against it, and this will happen.

**WALKING AWAY**

**I suddenly realized this is Germany. We are the Jews.**

**FADE OUT/FADE IN:**

**CHICAGO, IN THE HOUSE**

**The decision to come on this journey to Berlin had started back in my home in Chicago, when my children came to visit my wife and me. They had come to cheer me on. I was about to be interviewed for the Holocaust Survivors Project.**

M: The <sup>what was what</sup> philosophical question is should I wear...should I wear something like this, or like this, or generally should I <sup>telling</sup> tell the story of my life...there are historical consequences.

A: *The interview is in your home, you're supposed to be relaxed, I don't think you should wear a marynarka [jacket].*

#### DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

**My children had heard all the bits and pieces of my survival story. Now I was going to try to tell it all, and I was worrying about my legacy.**

#### GOING DOWNSTAIRS ALONG THE PHOTOGRAPHS

**But I also found myself wondering if, for my children, the word "German" would always be associated with the word "murderer."**

Interviewer: *The survivor is Marian Marzynski. The interview is being conducted in Chicago, Illinois, the United States of America, and we are conducting the interview in English!*

Interviewer: *Will you tell us what your name at birth was?*

M: Marian KUSHNER: K-U-S-H-N-E-R

#### INTERVIEW

M: *My grandfather was killed almost the day the Germans invaded Leczyca, and they point out by neighbors that he was the wealthy Jew who has gold, he was a dentist, and of course he had gold, gold teeth. He was killed on the market square, and his wife died of a heart attack in two weeks, they were the very first casualties of the holocaust.*

#### CHILDREN LISTENING

M: *...this is really the point of view of a little boy. It's mainly the feeling of bodies and legs and shoes, and Germans and dogs and shouts.....it's really very fragmented and the hours and waiting and waiting and fear and fear...you see, I was part of a dangerous game, and I knew there would be the moment of joy in the house, and the new danger will come. The anticipation of danger, that's what I learned, and until today I think it's in me.*

#### TRAIN ARRIVES/ENTERING S-BAHN

**In 1942, hiding on the Christian side of Warsaw I was riding a trolley with my Polish guardian. A German officer sat me on his lap and said: "nice boy". I was chocked by fear.**

#### PASSING VIEWS FROM S-BAHN

**Today I would like to achieve what my dead relatives could not: to feel safe among the Germans.**

#### WOMAN PLAYS HURDY-GURDY

**This is what my father would wish for me, as my only possible revenge for his senseless death.**

#### WALKING WITH JUROR RHONTE

**Helmut Rhonte, the director of the art museum in Hannover, is one of the five judges for the second competition. In Germany, he's what's called the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.**

## CONVERSATION WITH RHONTE

M: It that true that in German family you cannot ask father, daddy how many people you killed?

R: No.

M: You cannot: There will be no answer.

M: Or the kids will not ask or the parents will not answer.

R: The parents will not answer.

M: The kids ask always nasty questions.

R: Yes, but the parents go away to glorifying the very bad time they had, because this time is a problem for them.

M: So you recall. actually you asking those questions?

R: yes, but I never heard an answer from my father. I remember that we once went through Greece, and I said let's go over there. He said, 'No, I don't go there. And he never said more. Something was happening during the war. I don't know what.

M: But you knew. You know now?

R: No, he never told me.

M: I think it's mind blowing to me that you, you love your father and yet you know he did something that you will never do, you're so violently opposed to, right?

R: Yes.

M: And that you have to separate the two

R: Yes, this is what we learn in all during our life, to separate things to survive.

## WALKING WITH GESINE WEINMILLER ALONG THE SITE

Another participant in the competition is Gesine Weinmiller, a young star-architect, who has drawn many corporate high-rises in Germany, but never designed a monument.

## CONVERSATION WITH GESINE IN HER STUDIO

G: The problem for us is that we have no more Jews here in Germany. And, and [sic] we don't have the possibility, nearly...there are a few here in Berlin, a lot of in Berlin who speak Russian, and when you go to the Synagogue there are very few German spoken Jews, and they're...I think people who have my age, they don't meet any Jews. And so they, they have no problem with the Holocaust because it doesn't exist in their life, she says.

## GESINE EXPLAINS HER MODEL (29)

Gesine is 34 and part of what is known as the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation: the Children of Germans born after the War. During the '60s, their parents were attacking their own parents and grandparents, accusing them for their Nazi past. But Gesine's childhood was protected: there were no family horror stories told. For her, the Holocaust has to be experienced through symbols.

M: So, draw me with your finger the star of David.

G: Here. No. Here, here, here, here. That's one. For my children, her peers, the Holocaust is nothing but personal.

## WILLY BRAND CENTER FROM THE ELEVATOR

I've heard of a newly published book, a kind of Holocaust manifesto of the German 3<sup>rd</sup> generation.

3<sup>RD</sup> GENERATION PANEL → JENS is the editor of the book written by his  
It was written by a group of students from the prestigious Humboldt University and called "Nobody Asked Us".  
at

QUESTION FROM THE AUDIENCE

Subtitle:

What are saying by your title  
"Nobody Asked Us"?

JENS SPEAKS *in the book*

They say they are uncomfortable with the Holocaust memory their parents want them to live with. "Our understanding of the Holocaust should not be a forced confrontation with pictures from Auschwitz", I've read in the book.

LOTTE SPEAKS: *he says one of the authors:*

It must be based on our personal questions about morality, ethics, and the human condition.

2nd GENERATION PANEL

Wolfgang Thierse, the President of the Bundestag finds their arguments dry and unemotional... and says you can't entrust memory to individuals. There has to be an institutional response in the name of all Germans. He's the driving force behind the Berlin Memorial.

JOHANNES SPEAKS

So the children say back to their parents, "force it on us, and you run the risk of generations forgetting the holocaust altogether."

M. IN THE AUDIENCE

ENTERING HUMBOLDT UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. MEETING JENS

On the campus of Humboldt University, I am meeting the editor of the book. He is a 24-year old philosophy major, Jens Peiper. *we talk about second world war:*

CONVERSATION WITH JENS

J: My grandfather died when I was twelve or so. He could tell me a little bit which I could understand. He was in the war, in the Wermarcht, and he was totally against it, but he couldn't help but do it. And now, in the last years, after I started working on the subject, people tell me, like relatives and people close to me, tell me other stories, so when I was in school. I wouldn't feel about it, like there was a big thing. I mean, there were no Jews in my class, there were no foreigners in my class, there were not even some in my..

M; so it was in a sense a horror fiction story.

J: It was...

M: It was horror fiction story—it wasn't a reality story, it wasn't like you said 'How come that people who are German like myself could do it. It wasn't this in your head, it wasn't that..'

J: Oh, no...

M:...people of your DNA [laugh] could do it, right?

J; Yes. That's what we talked about. That was what makes bad dreams at night. That I, because I am German, I imagined myself, and I couldn't help but do it and others boys in my class, too, but think, well, I could be Kapo, or I could be, um, I could be the chief of the Katzet, I could be Mr. Hess...

*convener of a death camp.*

*this is for the end*

## JENS AND M. WALK

*M: Coming to Germany for me is still kind of a catharsis. I want to be here, but I don't want to be here, so I usually here, enthusiastic, and then I run away after two days. I've never been in Germany for more than three days. I have an aversion to language, which I am overcoming now, because I would like to learn. I would like to ...you know, I have to do something for myself, also, to liberate myself from the phobia. Because this phobia is not good.*

## JENS ON THE BIKE IN THE CITY.

**I learned a few things about his family. His father, a general is proud that today German soldiers can refuse to follow orders that seem morally wrong to them.**

## JENS ARRIVES IN THE COURTYARD ON THE BIKE. TILT TO THE BUILDING

**BUT when I asked Jens if I could film his parents, he checked with them, and they said "no".**

## THE GROUP GATHER FOR DISCUSSION

**There are eight authors of the book. Each of them submitted one essay.**

## DISCUSSION WITH M.

*M: I'm listening to you, and I do not hear the word guilt. And I know that everything that has been associated with Germans and Germany was always around guilt. Why are you not using the word?*

*LOTTE: You can't really feel for your grandparents response [sic]...guilt or anything. You can't really responsible for that type of thing because those are different people, even though maybe they are Germans, and even though they belong to your family. It's something you might negotiate with them in terms of why did you do this or something, but, it's not, it's just not been you, yourself who actually did this.*

*JOHANNES: We don't use the word guilt, but we talk about feeling awkward going abroad as a German*

*M: So if this book is not a question of guilt—what would be in German? Eine Fraga ...*

*Students: Shult.*

*M: Shult, this book is 'Eine Frage' of what?*

*MEIKE: We're replacing the meaning of guilt in society by memories, saying guilt is just a constant feeling that you have, giving attention to something that is in your head. It's a feeling. And the way we're thinking about the Holocaust is by memory. Remembering it. Giving it meaning.*

## WALKING WITH JOHANNES TO VANSEE MUSEUM

**Johannes Schwartz, one of the authors, is not Jewish, but he is getting a doctorate in Jewish Studies. He brings me to the suburban villa in Vansee, where Adolph Eichman laid out the plans to his Nazi bosses for the extermination of the Jews.**

## ENTERING THE VANSEE MUSEUM

**Schoolteachers hold workshops here. Johannes's friend Anja brought her class today.**

## IN THE WARSAW GHETTO ROOM

**The students are in the room called the Warsaw Ghetto. I will tell them I was there.**



M: It was in 1941, I was 4 years old, and I was brought with my family to the Warsaw Ghetto. We lived about 12 people in one room from all the family around, because we left our apartment on the other side of Warsaw. What I remember as a child, is that we had to continuously move from one apartment to another, so we would be going on the street with a wooden wagon with our belongings, and I was walking behind it.

Student: I have a question. Was it the same scene like in these pictures? You have..

M: Well, obviously, you know, those are very poor children.

#### DISCUSSION WITH STUDENTS AT THE MUSEUM

I tell them that my family had some means to survive in the ghetto, but when all Jewish children were supposed to be sent to the death camps, my father decided to smuggle me to the Christian site of the city to hide there. At the age of five, my survival depended on me keeping the secret of my Jewishness.

#### GOING TO SCHOOL

The next day, the teacher invited me to visit her classroom.

#### CLASSROOM DISCUSSION.

M: How is in German circumcision?

Teacher: Snidung.

M: Do you know what circumcision is?

Students: yes.

M: Are those boys circumcised?

[teacher translates, students laugh]

M: Are you? You are circum...why are you circumcised?

Boy: Higene.

Teacher: Hygenical reasons.

M: So this is only one boy that is circumcised. OK. Now you should know that all the Jews in the world are circumcised, and I'm not. That's why I'm alive.

[teacher translates in German]

M: I'm alive because I'm not circumcised.

Teacher: And why not?

M: because circumcision was a proof to Germans that I am a Jew. No polish man is circumcised.

Student: [German]

Teacher [translating]: Why did you not have yourself circumcised after everything, because it's a symbol for Judaism.

M: I'm not religious.

T; En ich religious.

M: I'm Jewish, but I'm not religious.

#### STUDENT SPEAK

To this daughter of Turkish immigrants in Germany racism is still around in the world. She asks me if I hate Germans?

M: Hate is a non-creative concept. Hate means that these things are frozen. That you don't believe in any change. If you don't believe in change in human, what it makes sense to live even.

#### WIDE SHOT OF CLASSROOM

"What is your understanding of the Holocaust?," I ask the students.

## STUDENTS SPEAK

Girl with curly hair: *Says*

We should be taught about it, so something bad like that will never happen again.

Blond girl:

How about Vietnam?  
Americans did as many bad things as the Germans.

Blond boy w messy hair:

I guess we should talk about it, but not emphasize it so much.

## GOING TO JOHANNES APARTMENT

My mother and I survived the Holocaust, but my father could not make it on the Christian side: his face looked too Jewish. And just for his face, he was killed.

## ON THE STAIRS

Johannes has invited me to his home.

*one of the authors of the book / the J*

## CONVERSATION WITH JOHANNES.

M: M: Let me tell you what is on my mind. On my mind, at the age of 65, is still the idea how it was possible that my family was wiped out and killed by the culture of civilized people called Germans. I think that my family was fantastic, that they were great people, they were honest. And I don't want to punish anybody for this, but I would like to find in Germany people that are equally outraged by this. *I tell Johannes*

J: What doesn't work today in schools, in holocaust education, really is building your pedagogic concepts on the concepts of guilt. Or the feeling of guilt at least. That somehow as a German you, and also in the following generations, that you still somehow a little bit guilty for what has happened, but at least you've got to cope with this heritage. *he answers*

M: Young generation needs to be told that you are not guilt boys and girls, you think so?

J: Yes.

M: And, this way, they will be more interested in studying history and understanding everything, yes?

J: Simply put, yes.

## JOHANNES PUTS HIS BABY TO SLEEP.

Johannes is looking for my approval and I am ready to give it to him. I wanted to hear a lullaby in German.

## ANTI-NAZI DEMONSTRATION

As I join a neighborhood rally against a neo-Nazi politician, I think about Johannes. I understand the discomfort with guilt in young Germans. But I doubt liberation from it will trigger their interest in learning about the tragic past? Without an emotional quest, how will the memory of German evil be preserved? Could there be such a thing as good guilt?

## YOUNG GIVES THE TOUR OF MODELS

The German government has taken the business of memory into its own hands. Professor James Young shows me the competition's new entries...

EISENMAN'S MODEL <sup>15</sup>

Starting with the acclaimed New York architect, Peter Eisenman,

city Another participant

Tom

He was mentioned at the site

YOUNG ON EISENMAN

Y: its truly unique, and in addition, it will be dangerous, literally dangerous.

AND I

(small)

WALKING WITH EISENMAN ON THE SITE:

M: So now I'm walking. Your project is built.

E; Yes, yes.

M: What am I seeing? What am I feeling?

E: You're seeing nothing, that's the interesting thing.

M: It's all in the ground?

E: No, no. It starts...like in the sidewalk there are little slab...each slab is 92 centimeters.

There are 4,000. They're...

of them

M: Yah..

E: lines up in rows, like the Nazis.

M: yes.

E: The whole idea is rationality gone mad. Entropy entering rationality. Because they're all like this. You go and walk in it, and you will feel uncertain. You know? These things are tilting. I don't know where I'm going. Am I going to get lost? I'm alone, I can't hold anybody's hand. And that—when they get done—was what it felt like to be a Jew in Germany in the '30s. That all. Basta. That's the monument.

119308

There are slabs underground."

WALKING ON THE STREET

E: We want to get over this idea of the Jew as other, so my monument is both a memory and a hope for the future. And it's to bring the Jewish cemetery into the everyday experience of the German [sic], in the middle of the city, but also, it could be a series, if you look at them, they're foundation stones for a new society.

M: Are you saying that through this monument, the Germans will accept Jews as living ...

E: ...yah...yah.

M:...among them? But they will be dead Jews.

E: No. no. no...

M: You are not bothered...dead Jews.

E: Not only dead Jews, but the idea for the potential for re-...what...you know what a gravestone is, it's the connection...

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the concept is abstract, like everything in a

GERTZ MODEL

Johan Gertz—a German living in Paris—wants to build on the plaza an educational center under the banners reading "warum? "Why?" repeated in the 31 languages spoken by Jewish victims in World War 2. The center would collect visitors' answers to "why"? A robot would engrave them in the concrete ground creating a public interaction with the subject of the Holocaust.

INTERVIEW WITH GERTZ

SAYS GERTZ

G: It is a place that relies on the quality of what every human being going there puts into the ground, and that means a place of democracy. It's a place that gives hold to democracy. And so the Shoah becomes a metaphor, not only for the Shoah, but for that you cannot rule without people. That you cannot take away from people their voices.

Gertz is convinced his idea won't win.

HE explains why.

M: So you are angry.

G: I'm kind of angry, which is my usual state [laughs]

M: you are angry because you think that they are not gutsy.

G: they are not...no...they don't know what to do. They don't know. They just want to read essays and they want to write essays, and they want to be on the good side, like in a museum. They don't want to get dirt on their fingers, and that's like it is.

M: They seem to tell, 'show me...

G: ...in theory...

M:... 'Show me responsibility, show me guilt, make me uncomfortable.' Sometimes I think even that they want a masochistic monument, do they?

G: But then they put a flowerpot, because they say 'art is art.' They say, "whatever happens, Auschwitz made us terrible, and has never left us since, but art is art."... So they have a kind of aspirin that they throw into the water, and a must-cure, and I don't believe in that.

G; The most remarkable thing about monuments is that nobody sees them...and that's in the best tradition of all that, you see? This is implosion, implosion, there's big masses...

M: You build it, and you are through. Right?

G: Yeah, and nobody sees them any more.

M: We're honored.

G: Yes.

M: Those two...who are those two guys?

G: Well, we know I guess.

M: Who are those two guys?

G: This is Marx and Engels.

M: This is Marx and Engles?

G: Yeah, I would say so.

M: That's right.

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M. AND GERTZ WALK AWAY

Gertz does not believe art can express the content of the Holocaust. What is needed is education. I wish he would win.

MONTAGE OF MODELS

The other artists did what they were expected to do: they searched for a Holocaust metaphor: stone walls forming bookends to represent the Jewish devotion to learning... the holocaust symbolized by the destruction of human habitat, by the entrapment of spirit, by the void in civilization and culture...and pure art: a huge figure of a Jewish mother with amputated hands.

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BUNDESTAG EXTERIOR

The powerful client of all those artists resides in the restored Reichstag, once the symbol of the German capital of evil.

BUNDESTAG. COMMEMORATION OF HOLOCAUST

The Bundestag, the United Germany's parliament, has returned to Berlin, In the restored Reichstag, where Hitler once has his parliament, they hold their annual session commemorating the Holocaust. I'm curious what they will choose as their permanent memorial.

## A BERLINER BIKES ALONG THE BERLIN WALL

Spring gives sparks to the free spirited writings on the remnants of the Berlin wall, the German Memorial of Cold War. It wasn't easy to be a German in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

## WALKING THE STREETS OF BERLIN.

I am back.

## STOPPING BY POLICE EXHIBIT

M: *And what's this*

Police: *That's a special. former uniforms we had those.*

Finally, I found a German soldier I can like....

## THOMAS ARRIVES IN A TAXI

My American friend Thomas Mehrel ~~said he would stop~~ in Berlin on the way to visit his mother in Munich. ~~He~~ told him I need an advisor to help me sort out my German experience.

## ON THE STAIRS TO HOTEL WITH THOMAS

He is a doctor, not a lawyer, but for me he has all the right credentials. He is a Jew born in Germany after the war.

visits are stops  
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AND

## OPENING THE WINDOW IN THE HOTEL

His Jewish-Hungarian mother survived a concentration camp as a young girl. His father was a survivor who lost his first wife and two sons.

## BREAKFAST WITH THOMAS

He is a true friend. I call him Tomaszek; he calls me Marys, my childhood name. He sees me as one of his older half-brothers he lost in the Holocaust. But unlike me, who by a sheer miracle survived the war and celebrated life in post-war Poland, he was a cynical Jewish boy growing up among perpetrators.

## THOMAS AND MARIAN IN THE TRAIN. CONVERSATION

He is telling me about the incident, which was the last straw for his decision of leaving Germany and going to America.

On the way to the #01  
JEW  
M...  
IN  
BE

T: *We were all sitting in the clinic where I worked, which was at the university. There were about between twenty and thirty physicians, and one of the days we had lunch he said, "Oh," let's say, "Dr. Rappaport from the United States was here. He gave a speech about this, and gave a talk. Can you imagine what his honorarium was?" "Oh, no." "Ten thousand dollars. Typical for those Hebrews." And I was just eating my soup, and I almost choked...*

M: *And how did he know that you were a Jew?*

T: *Everybody knew.*

## WALKING TO THE THEATER

I thought we should see the longest running play in post-war Berlin under the title *This is not my fault – Adolph Hitler did it*.

## FRAGMENTS OF THE PLAY

Thomas, my cameraman, and I are among five people in the audience. Very few are willing to listen to this German self-hatred. This is the man behind the play. "You can interview me", he said, "but only if you don't reveal that I am Jewish. His play died a long time ago."

## THOMAS AND MARIAN IN THE SYNAGOGUE. SINGING.

When Thomas grew up in Germany there were no more than 20,000 Holocaust survivors living here. Now, 250,000 Jews live here, most of them in Berlin. In the past twenty-five years waves of Jewish immigrants were coming from Russia. It is a well-known secret that to flee Soviet communism, some of them fabricated their Jewish origin.

Thomas blames this new Jewish community for what he calls the syndrome of the unknown Jew. If young Germans want to look for a personal experience with Jews to understand the meaning of the Holocaust, these new German Jews are unlikely to give it to them. Their peace of mind depends on avoiding a confrontation.

## JEWISH MUSEUM IN BERLIN EXT & DETAIL

We are visiting another institution of memory. The Jewish Museum of Berlin was designed by the son of Holocaust survivors, Daniel Liebeskin. Liebeskin has drawn a building, which was reminiscent of the war, a wounded structure evoking German crimes against the Jews.

## JOHANNES AND THE TOURISTS ON THE STAIRS

In his spare time, my friend Johannes is a tour guide here.

## TRACKING THROUGH THE JEWISH STREET

The building was erected before the City decided what should be inside the Museum and a controversy erupted: how to tell the story of the lives of German Jews under such a shadow of death? The safe solution was not to focus on the Holocaust.

## JOHANNES GUIDING THE TOUR

The idea was that Jews no longer live in Germany and their religion has been forgotten. So Johannes will explain the torah, the way Jews behave in the synagogue, the way they celebrate Shabbat, what they do or don't eat, how they marry each other and how they circumcise their boys.

## MORE OF THE TOUR

I imagine myself stepping forward and saying: "I come from two generations of non-religious Jews, I don't do the rituals, so how do I fit your picture?" I won't embarrass Johannes. I will ask him later.

MEETING JOHANNES AFTER THE TOUR. THOMAS SPEAKS IN GERMAN.

Thomas, who was introduced to Judaism by his Orthodox father, says that by merely rationalizing Jewish rituals, the traditional targets of anti-Semitism, Johannes builds a very weak case for the Jews. The key to understand the Jews, especially in Germany, is elsewhere.

*WE MEET WITH THE GUIDE IN THE OUTSIDE*

M: Both Thomas and I have a little obsession. This obsession is called anti-Semitism. When we talk about Jews, we really talk about anti-Semitism. So when we come to Germany to make friends with people who are obviously not anti-Semitic. They love Jews, or they don't love Jews. We worry if, if this, what they saying or disseminate or teach at schools. Will this remove anti-Semitism? And we are impatient we would like to have affect now.

*says the guide*

J: First of all, it's no holocaust museum here. It tries to counterbalance the picture youngsters get in schools today about Jews, as the always persecuted and murdered and so on. This one shows there is a much richer history, and longer history, richer culture of Jewish life in Germany almost two thousand years, although it's wrong that they write German-Jewish history.

M: The fact that Jews were others in a society like German society. That is the logical story that should be told and understand with its dramatic and tragic ending.

T: I have 2 children. They are twelve and 14, and there is compulsory Holocaust education in the United States, and it is something that is very unpleasant for them. But you need to be prepared for that. Prepared for the culmination of the Holocaust. You have to prepare from a very early age on...

J: I agree...

T: ...to understand, and to be...to graduate, to see the brutality, and the annihilation that will ensue if certain steps are not taken in human education.

J: But don't over-do it. I mean...

*says the guide*

T: You cannot over do it. agree with him, you cannot over-do it. You have to do it right.

J: Any anti-Semite coming here won't be changed in a museum like this and that is what we are told in our training, that you won't change anybody in here...

T: Let me ask you...

J: We can just offer some, well, knowledge.

M: I am truly moved by what you do here. I'm just asking myself is that enough. Is the wonderful museum enough to assure my children that this horrible nonsense of one people killing another will stop ever? Don't know.

## DRIVING BY THE MEMORIAL SITE

The results of the second competition for the Memorial to the Six Million Murdered Jews of Europe are in. Peter Eisenman is the winner.

## SCHLUSCHE IN HIS OFFICE EXPLAINS EISENMAN'S PROJECT

S.: one is inclined a little to the left, one is inclined a little bit to the right.

*City architect Schlusche is ecstatic.*

S.: One in the front, one to the back, and that makes it...the whole thing looks, as Peter has put it, like a wave of the ocean.

## NEWSPAPER

The memorial is making headlines.

M: So everybody's writing today. What does that say, this article?

S: The headline is "the Memorial will be a Thorn in the Flesh".

M: So then ideally we should feel this.

S: Not necessarily, you can feel this. of course it is not a very pleasant to deal with...

M:...death...

S:...the murder...

M: ...Of 6 million Jews...

S:...of people. Yeah. It cannot be pleasant, so in that way it should be, in a way, a little bit of pain, you know.

M: A little pain, not a big pain, a little pain.

S. Exactly...a very little pain, and more, it should be a piece of art.

#### TRACKING MEMORIAL SITE

The building of the labyrinth of concrete pillars of different heights to trap and isolate viewers from the outside world and from each other has begun. Fearing neo-Nazis, the German Parliament passed a law forbidding all demonstrations on streets surrounding the Memorial to be unveiled on the 60th Anniversary of the end of World War 2.

#### TRACKING ALONG THE RIVER

Art freezes the memory and can easily turn it into fiction. Only living memory can give me—the Holocaust survivor—peace of mind.

HURDY-GURDY MUSIC. BIKERS IN THE PARK. IN THE CAR WITH THOMAS  
Thomas rented a car for our Sunday sightseeing of Berlin.

#### M. LEARNS GERMAN WITH THOMAS

*Subtitle: What do you do on a Sunday in Berlin?*

M: Not much.

#### BERLIN WITH BALOON

~~M: So the balloon is the point of view on the new Germany. Here is the Bundestag, here is Brandenburg Gate, Holocaust Memorial, and then the new Berlin. The center of, the new center of Europe.~~

#### DRIVING BY LUFTWAFFE BUILDING

We stopped at the Luftwaffe building, Hitler's Air Force Command, now a Treasury Department. This is the only relic of Nazi architecture that the East German Government left in tact. The other structures were destroyed in a typical quick-fix governmental manner: no building - no bad memory.

#### LOOKING AT MURAL

The East German government bluntly declared that Communism and Nazism were mortal enemies, and a new reality was painted over Germany's dark past. Like all propaganda, it backfired. Today, former East Germans are among the most active Neo-Nazis.



#### WORKING WITH THOMAS AT THE CEMETERY

Weisensee, one of Europe's biggest Jewish cemeteries was also in the former East Berlin. A few days ago 27 Jewish head stones were toppled and vandalized here.

#### LOOKING FOR THE GRAVE

Thomas got me a map with the location of the grave of my stepfather's mother—the grandmother I never knew. Before the war she visited the Jewish-German side of the Marzynski family and died of heart disease during her visit.

#### AT THE GRAVE

As I feared, the worst has happened: my grandmother's grave was vandalized and the plate with her name is missing. Another memory erased.

#### THOMAS SEATING ON THE STONE. CONVERSATION WITH THOMAS

*M: I think if we would achieve peace, if I would achieve peace, I wouldn't be sitting here looking for my grandmother's grave. I don't know who we are, actually. If we are Hebrew, we are a religious people, or are we just the Others who were condemned to death. That's to me my religion. My religion is Holocaust. This is the only way I can brace...*

*T: But that's a very negative definition of who we are.*

*M: but that's what I associate with Jews. Believe me, if the Germans didn't want to live my family, I probably would be forgetting about my past, because the idea of my father was that we should be like everybody else. That's the whole idea. We're not the Others. ~~So our family was in such incredible good shape, because we were Jewish, but we were not religious, so that Catholics who were also not religious were making friends with us, so we thought we had both ways. You know? My father, he was a genius, because he figured out the way for us to live in a better world. Pom. [slaps hands together] Then they started to kill us. So obviously when I come today, this is why I am Jewish, because we were killed.~~*

#### SUBJECTIVE CEMETERY

I set out on this journey to liberate my children from the prison of my Holocaust memories. I found among their peers, young Germans, a reasonable request: to be liberated from the sins of their grandparents. I leave it to them to find each other. But for me, a Jew among the Germans, I wish there would be no celebration to the end of World War II. No finishing touches. My unreasonable request to the German people would be to live in the permanent state of good guilt. If I knew that such thing exists.