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INFORMATION

MEMORIAL TO THE HOMOSEXUALS PERSECUTED UNDER THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST REGIME

CHRONOLOGY

1992/1993

The first demands and actions in favour of a national memorial site for the homosexuals persecuted under the National Socialist regime arise in the context of discussions surrounding the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

1995

Publishing of the memorandum »Remember the Homosexual Victims of National Socialism«

25 June 1999

The German Bundestag resolves to erect a memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe and acknowledges the obligation to »duly honour all other victims of National Socialism«

3 May 2001

The initiative »Remember the Homosexual Victims of National Socialism« and the Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany jointly call for »a memorial to the homosexuals persecuted by the National Socialist regime«. Paul Spiegel, Romani Rose, Günter Grass, Christa Wolf and Lea Rosh, among others, also lend their support

17 May 2002

The German Bundestag resolves to rehabilitate all those who fell victim to Section 175 of the German Criminal Code during the reign of National Socialism in Germany

12 December 2003

German Bundestag resolution to build the memorial site

2005/2006

Artistic competition for the design of the memorial site

4 June 2007

Agreement between the Federal Government, the initiators of the memorial and the artists Elmgreen & Dragset concerning the further development of their winning design (Photo top: Ingar Dragset and Michael Elmgreen)

27. May 2008

Public unveiling of the memorial

How to arrive

Bus: 100, 123, 148, 200, M41, TXL

S-Bahn stations: Unter den Linden and Potsdamer Platz, S1, S2, S26

U-Bahn stations: Potsdamer Platz and Mohrenstraße, U2

Contact

Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

– Coordinating Office –

Stresemannstraße 90

10963 Berlin, Germany

www.stiftung-denkmal.de

Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany

Initiative »Remember the Homosexual Victims of National Socialism«

Chausseestraße 29

10115 Berlin, Germany

www.lsvd.de

www.gedenkort.de

The Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime receives generous support from:



Der Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien





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THE MEMORIAL

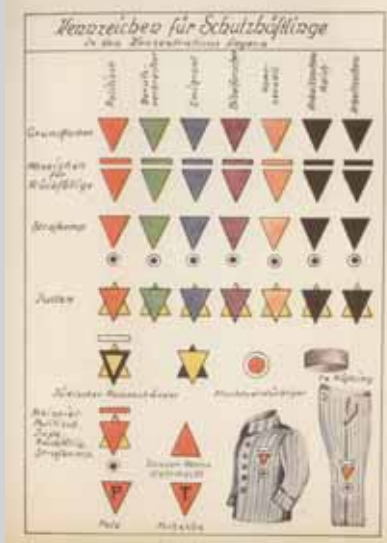
The memorial is located close to the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag building, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Memorial to the Murdered Sinti and Roma (still under development).

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN A PUBLIC KISS BETWEEN TWO PERSONS OF THE SAME SEX COULD CAUSE OFFENCE IN SOCIETY ... AND IT STILL CAN

The monument was designed by the artistic duo of Michael Elmgreen (Denmark) and Ingar Dragset (Norway), who have lived and worked together in Berlin since 1995.

According to Elmgreen & Dragset's interpretation, a monument should have the character of a living organism subject to dynamic change rather than a static and final statement. The two artists have closely adapted their aesthetic conceptualisation to the monument's immediate surroundings. For their sculptural rendition of the memorial, they have chosen to appropriate the formal language of the Holocaust Memorial directly opposite. In Elmgreen & Dragset's version, however, the cubic sculptural shape of Eisenman's stela acquires an additional layer. Through a small square window in the cube, the spectator can see a film depicting two men embracing in an endless kiss. With its clear allusion to the monument on the other side of the street, the memorial seems to be saying, we are the same kind of human beings, yet we are also different from each other. And therein lies the challenge to our tolerance and acceptance.

In two years, the film inside the cube will be exchanged for the first time. The new one, created by a series of different artists, will offer their interpretations of a scene of gay or lesbian love. In this way, the memorial will be a constantly evolving one.



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OPPRESSION, PERSECUTION, MURDER

In Nazi Germany, homosexuality was persecuted to a degree unprecedented in history. In 1935, the National Socialists issued an order making all male homosexuality a crime; the provisions governing homosexual behaviour in Section 175 of the Criminal Code were significantly expanded and made stricter. A kiss was enough reason to prosecute. There were more than 50,000 convictions. Under Section 175, the punishment was imprisonment; in some cases, convicted offenders were castrated. Thousands of men were sent to concentration camps for being gay; many of them died there. They died of hunger, disease and abuse or were the victims of targeted killings.

The National Socialists destroyed the communities of gay men and women. Female homosexuality was not prosecuted, except in annexed Austria; the National Socialists did not find it as threatening as male homosexuality. However, lesbians who came into conflict with the regime were also subject to repressive measures. Under the Nazi regime, gay men and women lived in fear and under constant pressure to hide their sexuality.

For many years, the homosexual victims of National Socialism were not included in public commemorations – neither in the Federal Republic of Germany nor in the German Democratic Republic. In both East and West Germany, homosexuality continued to be prosecuted for many years. In the Federal Republic, Section 175 remained in force without amendment until 1969.

Because of its history, Germany has a special responsibility to actively oppose the violation of gay men's and lesbians' human rights. In many parts of the world, people continue to be persecuted for their sexuality, homosexual love remains illegal and a kiss can be dangerous.



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The memorial was built in accordance with the resolution of the German Bundestag. The initiators were the initiative »Remember the Homosexual Victims of National Socialism« and the »Lesbian and Gay Federation of Germany«. The Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has been entrusted with administering the memorial site on behalf of the Federal Government.

Resolution of the German Bundestag from 12 December 2003

»The Federal Republic of Germany shall erect a memorial in Berlin to the homosexuals persecuted under the National Socialist regime.

With this memorial, the Federal Republic of Germany intends – to honour the victims of persecution and murder, – to keep alive the memory of this injustice, and – to create a lasting symbol of opposition to enmity, intolerance and the exclusion of gay men and lesbians.«