Chapter III

The Institutionalisation of National Memory in Monumental Projects since 1989

In spite of differences between their forms, the motives of their organisers and their public reception, the 'Vél' d'Hiv" and 'Holocaust Monument' share analogous functions as focal points of the negotiation of national self-understanding on the basis of memories of war crimes. The common characteristic of these "discursive" sites of memory lies in their capacity to provoke and channel public discussion on history and on the means of transmitting history to generations which did not witness events in person. In chapter, I will attempt to show how these monuments largely conform to the definition of sites of memory developed from research in the field during the 1980s, but also how they convey a series of discursive cultural codes which are shared internationally, despite political appeals to understand them as national monuments. In other words, the analogous means of rendering history via symbols and commemorations in different countries offers insight into the relation between models of historical interpretation and understanding across national borders. Although the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument constitute symbolic elements of national memory cultures referring to distinct historical events and commemorative forms, they emerged within a context of discussion on a local and national level which was fuelled by similar political issues (the role of the state and minorities), commemorative codes (sculptural symbols and commemorative speeches) and levels of discourse (on nationhood, generations and symbolic reparation or compensation).

Both debates were conducted essentially within political and intellectual circles, and drew on complex aesthetic, historical and political issues. However, it is possible to interpret the social function of these monuments only partially as a prop for social or class identity. Discussions took place between journalists, intellectuals, politicians on the occasion of exhibitions, public forums or parliamentary debates - diverse forms of social communication which, once relayed by the mass media, offered a platform for dispute rather than consensus. Associations like the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 or Perspektive Berlin were small and their role limited to establishing conditions which, though determinant, were subsequently disputed. They did not sustain forms of cohesive "cultural sociability"[1] on the basis of ritual activities of closed groups; although the Vél' d'Hiv' and

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[1] Charlotte Tacke, *Denkmal im sozialen Raum. Nationale Symbole in Deutschland und Frankreich im 19. Jahrhundert,* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1995, p. 78.

Holocaust Monument both owe their existence to the initiative of associations or "citizens' action groups", they were rendered public primarily by countless articles in the mass media, which ensured that the sociability fostered by these monuments surpassed the scope of associations. Participation in the emergence of these monuments extended to a broader section of the public, pervaded informal conversation, included state representatives and, particularly in Germany, provoked critical discussion on their form and function. Moreover, participation in the monument projects was facilitated by a number of different associations other than those whose sole purpose was to initiate commemorations: Protestant organisations such as the Vereinigung Evangelischer Freikirchen (VEF) and the Kirchenamt der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland (EKD), the association Lebensbaum, committed to "counselling on all kinds of problems", the left-wing association Initiativkreis gegen den Schlußstrich, and the right-wing regional association Bund Freier Bürger also staged public meetings on the subject of the Holocaust Monument in 1999.[2]

The prolonged and complex nature of the public debates concerning each of these monuments appears to confirm the suggestion proposed by the philosopher Jean-Marc Ferry that sites of memory not only *rally* collective emotions behind a charismatic figure or historical event, but also spur "intersubjective" communication about the very significance and function of symbols. Both the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument stimulated what may be called meta-discussion on the present-day political function of historical symbols, such that they were not only "sentimental" forces of social cohesion or identity according to Nora's terminology, but also sources of "ethnographical" critiques of historical symbols and self-understanding. According to Ferry, "c'est pourquoi le troisième niveau indiqué par Pierre Nora, un niveau que l'on peut nommer 'symbolique', est ici indispensable, tant sous l'aspect éthique que sous l'aspect cognitif lui-même. Ce n'est ni le niveau subjectif du souvenir affectif, ni le niveau objectif de la description factuelle, mais le niveau intersubjectif qui trouve déjà un moment premier avec la commémoration".[3] In addition to the "affective" appeal of symbols and their "factual" historical content, sites of memory offer a basis for public negotiation of historical memories and their political function.

In order to understand how societies represent and articulate shared memories, and how these memories compare or differ from one country to another, I have attempted in Chapter II to examine the objects, issues and agents of public debate relating to two monuments of the Second

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[2] The VEF and EKD held a meeting at the Jewish Cultural Centre in Berlin on 3 March 1999; the Lebensbaum association invited the writer Martin Walser and representatives of religious communities to a hearing on 10 June 1999 within the scope of the project "Geschichte und Toleranz"; the Initiativkreis gegen den Schlußstrich staged a public discussion on the planned site of the monument on 30 May 1999; the Bund Freier Bürger held a demonstration against the Holocaust Monument in front of the Neue Wache on 19 June 1999.

[3] Jean-Marc Ferry, *L'Ethique reconstructive,* Paris: Cerf, 1996, p. 44.

World War. Essential to this analysis are the ways in which monuments are made public via ceremonies and speeches, and thus represented as foci or instruments of national memory. The aim of the following chapter is therefore to compare the role played by two major commemorations of crimes of the Second World War as "prisms" through which interpretations of memory cultures in France and Germany were publicly negotiated in the 1990s. The debates over both monuments focused on form, either the rhetoric of speeches (in France) or architectural dimensions (in Germany), such that their *political* explosiveness would have been inconceivable if there had been no prior argument over the interpretation of their *formal* commemorative value.

Following a general comparison of the two monuments and their accompanying debates while referring to points raised in chapters I and the empirical investigations undertaken in Chapter II, I will attempt to identify codes which structured the meanings of these symbols, and the broader spheres of discourse (concerning the nation, generations and compensation) with which participants in the debates expressed and justified their attitudes towards the nation and historical memory. Finally, in contrast to existing normative definitions of monuments as "counter-", "ephemeral" or "undesirable", for example, I will attempt to classify the monuments studied here as *dialogic,* in the wake of James Young's insistence that public dialogue over the meaning of monuments takes priority over aesthetic form.[4] This concept of a dialogic monument offers an opportunity to explore the function of monuments as a source of public participation in the discursive construction of historical self-understanding. Monuments as sites of memory thus prove to be a form of dual, aesthetic and political representation.

1. Analogies Between the Debates over the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument

An initial analysis of the objects, issues and actors of the debates as outlined above suggests that the two monuments have little in common. The site of the Vél' d'Hiv' is small (approximately 3 square metres), situated in a raised garden not visible at street level to passers-by; it is a figurative sculpture in bronze marking an "authentic" historical site on which a specific event took place on a precise date; it was erected in conjunction with an annual commemoration, preceded by petitions focusing public attention on a presidential speech rather than on sculptural form. By contrast, the site of the Holocaust Monument is very large (20000 square metres) and conspicuously located in

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[4] Young puts emphasis on "the activity of remembering together", arguing that monuments should "make visible the activity of memory" and expose "the memorial-making process [...] their essential constructedness". Cf. James Young, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning,* New Haven & London: Yale, 1993, p. 7 & 11.

the heart of the city; it will have an abstract sculptural form evoking the genocide against Jews generally rather than a particular historical occurrence associated with a single authentic site; and it was not conceived in conjunction with an annual ceremony but as the sole object of petitions and public debate. Moreover, the debate in Germany lasted over ten years (in contrast to 3 years in France), involved a broader section of society, and touched upon fundamental methodological questions concerning the site, form, necessity and political procedure required to realise the project.

In spite of these differences, there exist remarkable analogies between the origins and political function of each monument. Both were initiated by citizens' action groups with petitions published in daily national newspapers, and both campaigns involved the public and highest political representatives, including national parliaments, party leaders, two French presidents and German chancellors. In both cases, petitions appealed for a "national" symbolic reparation while focusing on representations dedicated to Jewish victims, and both debates were interrupted by elections, followed by a change of president in 1995 in France and a change of government in 1998 Germany.

While these projects incited politicians to formulate informal policies on the monuments, they also provoked the formation of political factions which undermined traditional party unity. Divisions arose within the Gaullist RPR party and PS in France, and within the SPD and CDU at local and national levels in Germany. Moreover, both monuments functioned as correctives of existing monuments and previous state commemorations: of the Mémorial aux Martyrs de la Déportation in France, of the Neue Wache and Buchenwald memorials in Germany, and of the elaborate fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944. In both countries, existent memorials had rendered the commemoration of victims as a universal commemoration of *victimisation* by discounting the specific ethnic, gender, political or religious identities of deportees. The Gaullist memorial identified deportees as "French". The Neue Wache was dedicated to "victims of war and tyranny" generally and only subsequently, following public protest, amended with a bronze plaque naming specific victim groups. Finally, both debates about the monuments were overshadowed by conditions established in the initial petitions demanding the symbolic reparation of the entire nation and, by implication, broad consensus on the significance of symbolic gestures and monuments. In France, politicians strove for reconciliation over the immediate issue of whether crimes of deportation occurring fifty years earlier should be acknowledged in a speech by the president. In Germany, consensus was sought over the issues of

the site, size and form, but also over the procedure for selecting the monument and over its very purpose in a city already endowed with numerous commemorative sites.

Despite the fact that both debates offered a platform for political and public figures to express attitudes towards history, neither commemoration lent itself to an unambiguous "instrumentalisation" of political interests. The existence of monuments or commemorative rituals does not guarantee the maintenance of memories of events, such that public statements in favour of or against memorials may not be equated with desires to either remember or forget the past. The application of such arguments to the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument were based on the erroneous assumption that there exists a proportional relation between representations and subjective historical memories. •[Petitions applied incommensurable political conditions on the monuments. Single symbols cannot be binding for entire national communities, and the act of naming them as such raises false expectations that a monument should "represent" or "reflect" collective memory on the basis of a one-to-one relation between artefacts and historical self-understanding. However, the fact that authority was consistently attributed to the conditions of petitions, and later implemented by French presidents and the German parliament, is perhaps a reflection of a continuing social demand for state-decreed symbols.]•

Some of the discursive codes used to articulate a sense of belonging to a memory culture in these debates evolved during the nineteenth century. The sociologist Bernhard Giesen identifies three categories of codes employed in the construction of "collective identity"[5] in the nineteenth century and which have largely subsisted in the twentieth century: *boundaries*, *origins* and *differences*. Other codes are defined by Giesen as "primordial", which presuppose the perception of the nation as *natural;* "conventional", identifying *ingroups* and *outgroups* in terms of "us" and "them"; and "cultural", derived from the construction of cultural *emblems.* The first three codes recurred in debates over the Vél' d'Hiv' and the Holocaust Monument, which were categorised territorially with respect to boundaries as central symbols commemorating historical origins or rather "founding moments"[6] of each nation (the caesura of the Second World War) and symbolically integrating "difference" on behalf of Jewish victims of deportation and genocide. Further primordial, conventional and cultural codes were expressed in connection with the Vél' d'Hiv' and the Holocaust Monument: the initial petitions established conditions for the types of commemoration (speech or monument, and their significance as emblems standing for national

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[5] Bernhard Giesen, *Die Intellektuellen und die Nation. Eine deutsche Achsenzeit*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993, p. 28.

self-understanding) which were perceived as "natural" and, therefore, taken for granted insofar as they were accepted as conditions throughout the ensuing debates; the combined relevance of these monuments for the nation and for victims likewise polarised perceptions of historical actors as two distinct "in-" and "outgroups" - of perpetrators and their descendants belonging to the nation on the one hand, and victims not belonging on the other, where the goal of each monument was to reconcile these groups and dissolve the polarity; finally, both monuments are "cultural" emblems perpetuating the traditional genre of national monuments, although they were not designed to pay homage to cultural figures of the nation, but to mourn the dead of another community and acknowledge responsibility for their death.

Neither the Vél' d'Hiv' nor Holocaust Monument are inherently national monuments, yet their significance was anticipated and interpreted as such. Both have been criticised for being inapt as national representations: the Vél' d'Hiv' because it is a monument of collaboration with another state;[7] the Holocaust Monument because it is open to multiple interpretations,[8] because it is too big, or because there previously existed a sufficient number of memorials. Although the debates focused on the quest to propose a speech or sculpture which could fulfil the criteria of a genuinely "national" monument, the aim of the present analysis is not to provide an answer to the conditions of petitions, but to explain the resulting mechanisms by which the monuments were constructed and perceived as national and thereby won public acceptance.

One reason why these monuments evolved into national monuments in spite of their historical inaptness lies in their formal aptness as sites for public rituals and visual reproduction in photographs. One can easily identify and visually conceive a single site like a cycling stadium or a monument marking its place, which can be seen, photographed, visited, which serves as a stage for political rituals, and about which spectators are able to read and relate stories from the past. The images and historical narratives associated with the Vél' d'Hiv', for example, were rendered public by the introduction of the "Journée nationale commémorative des persécutions racistes et antisémites" in 1993, which now stands as the key annual event relating to Vichy in the French commemorative calendar. Images relating to the Holocaust Monument were broadcast extensively during architectural competitions, showing models and their designers. Rituals and the mass media

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[6] Cf. Lyn Spillman, *Nation and Commemoration. Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 70.

[7] Eric Conan & Henry Rousso propose the introduction of anti-Semitic laws on 3 October 1940 in the unoccupied zone as a truly national site of memory:*Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas,* Paris: Fayard, 1994, p. 65.

[8] Other, less ambiguous, sites were proposed in the report by Urs Kohlbrenner, Günter Schlusche & Bernhard Schneider, "Standortuntersuchung der im Colloquium benannten Standorte", in: Senatsverwaltung für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur (ed.), *Colloquium. Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas: Dokumentation*, Berlin, pp. 65-89.

likewise entrenched the perception of these monuments as national. While many fiftieth anniversary commemorations in the 1990s combined the simultaneous participation of several nations (for example, on 8 May (capitulation of National Socialists), 6 June (Normandy landings), 29 August (liberation of Paris)), the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument were constructed within the context of strictly nationwide debates, and with the participation of state representatives. The degree to which an event lends itself to commemoration is therefore closely dependent on the forms in which the event can be represented and communicated to a public which has no direct experience of the period in question.[9] The emergence of sites of memory like the Vél' d'Hiv' depends on both formal and political conditions which impose limits on, if not predetermine the types of historical events which may be effectively appropriated as national symbols. The political expediency of a monument is therefore partially dependent on its form.

A second reason why these symbols evolved as "national" sites of memory may be the facility with which political issues of the present-day may be associated with or "grafted" onto those relevant to the event being commemorated. The fact that these monuments became established as central sites of memory during the 1990s may be imputed to prevailing political issues. Moral issues were raised relating the deportation and genocide of the 1940s to contemporary issues of xenophobia and the national integration of minority communities. In France, Chirac's speech of 1995 raised the issue of the legitimacy of Jewish memories of the Second World War in relation to the contemporary problem of racism by associating anti-Semitism under Vichy with the present political issue of the exclusion of ethnic minorities. As a consequence of increased exclusion, variously referred to as the "cultural fragmentation" or "ethnocentrism"[10] of French society, where the marginalisation of social groups such as French Algerians undermines the integrative force of republicanism, the Vél' d'Hiv' evolved into a symbol not only of anti-Semitic persecutions under Vichy, but also of the repressive treatment of minorities in general, both past and present. For this reason, the "imprescriptible debt" of which president Chirac spoke in 1995 was not a declaration of legal but of *moral* debt, which applied primarily to the treatment of Jews under the Vichy regime and also, by association, to the treatment of minorities today. Rhetoric served to graft political issues of the 1990s onto those of the 1940s. While the Holocaust

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[9] The public interest in the Reichskristallnacht similarly derives from its dramatic and poetic connotations, which make it particularly memorable and commemorable without regard for historical details of the event. According to Michal Bodemann, the Reichskristallnacht "ist dramatisch, weil sie den Beginn des Holocaust darstellt, sie ist emblematisch, von lebendiger Bildhaftigkeit, ein Spiel der Guten gegen die Bösen, mit dem Bonus der Gewalt". *Gedächtnistheater. Die jüdische Gemeinschaft und ihre deutsche Erfindung,* Hamburg: Rotbuch Verlag, 1996, p. 116.

[10] Wieviorka, "Culture, société et démocratie", in Wieviorka (ed.), *Une Société fragmenté? Le multiculturalisme en débat,* Paris: La Découverte, 1996, pp. 11-60, p. 14, 38-40.

Monument was also justified by its advocates on moral and pedagogical grounds, the "grafting" of political issues was not related to minorities in general, but specifically to the function of the monument - inciting speculation whether it should represent all or only Jewish victim groups, and whether it would incite vandals to use the monument as a surface for political graffiti. Both the Vél' d'Hiv' and the Holocaust Monument fulfil a pedagogical function as symbols of past crimes warning against their repetition in the future.

A third reason why these symbols emerged as "national" sites of memory may be ascribed to the involvement of state representatives in a phenomenon which the political scientist John Gaffney calls "political personalism".[11] Sites were closely associated with political personalities, their involvement in commemorations and their expressed understandings of history. Sustained controversy surrounded the participation of political leaders in successive commemorations at the Vél' d'Hiv' site, including President Mitterrand in 1992 and 1994, President Chirac in 1995, and the prime ministers Edouard Balladur and Lionel Jospin 1993 and 1997 respectively. Commemorative ceremonies and speeches often functioned either as a prop or as an obstacle to political legitimation. Debate over the Vél' d'Hiv' in 1992, for example, was marked by new biographical revelations about the ambiguous role of president Mitterrand in Vichy, who was first employed at the Commission for Prisoners between 1942 and 1943, and only subsequently operated Resistance activities from 1943 onwards by organising the regrouping of war prisoners.[12] In 1995, president Chirac's Vél' d'Hiv' speech occurred only ten weeks after his election as president on 7 May, and was the first major symbolic event of his presidency, followed by the transfer of André Malraux's ashes to the Pantheon in November 1996. In Germany, the debate was similarly punctuated by controversies staged as political duels between individuals, either for or against the project: between the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Ignatz Bubis, and the writer Martin Walser, between Chancellor Kohl and the designated Federal Cultural Representative Michael Naumann prior to the parliamentary elections of 1998, or between Chancellor Schröder and the governing mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen, in 1999. The figure of the president therefore played a consistent role in the symbolic construction of both monuments.

2. Cultural Codes of Post-national Sites of Memory

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[11] John Gaffney defines "political personalism" as a combination of the symbolic personification of the nation in the president and the actual presidential function of leadership. Cf. J. Gaffney, *The French Left and the Fifth Republic. The Discourses of Communism and Socialism in Contemporary France,* London: Macmillan, 1989, p. 198f.

[12] This activity culminated in the formation of the National Movement of War Prisoners. Cf. Olivier Wieviorka, *Nous entrerons dans la carrière. De la Résistance à l'exercice du pouvoir,* Paris: Seuil ,1994, p. 325.

A. "National monument": a misnomer?

This exploration of commemorations in France and Germany from 1989 onwards, in particular the monuments, institutions and debates forming the basis of memory cultures in these countries, raises the question: to what extent are memory cultures national in scope and appeal? Despite legitimate claims to alternative non-national forms of social adherence, whether regional, ethnic, transnational or cosmopolitan,[13] history continues to be widely understood and projected in the public sphere as the consequence and continuing responsibility of nations. Monuments representing wars, cultural achievements and political figures, for example, underpin mental structures based on national history which are sustained by national media and languages. Moreover, smaller groups laying claim to regional or ethnic identities, or larger groups representing European, transnational or religious identities, are often defined only in relation to and as negations of existing nation-states insofar as they contest the exclusive legitimacy of the claim of nations to historical memory. Do debates over fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the Second World War, including the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument continue this trend, or do they call for a redefinition of national memory cultures in France and Germany? Do these symbolic "prisms" of public attitudes to history foster conventional national "identity" and have an integrative effect on memory cultures, or do they undermine national consensus?

According to Anthony Smith, a modern nation may be defined as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights, and duties for all members".[14] But can we speak of "shared" historical memories with respect to a nation which engages in prolonged polemic over its allegedly national symbols? What proportion of the French or German populations can be said to harbour historical memories relating directly to single symbols or commemorations? In reality, neither the Vél' d'Hiv' nor Holocaust Monument embody the criterion of sharedness underscored in Smith's definition of nationhood. The memories of this period are a constant source of *disagreement,* suggesting that, although many people share memories of the historical event, the moral and emotional attitudes associated with them are anything but shared. In order to define monuments as truly national, we would have to make assumptions about their contextual causes

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[13] Cf. Anthony Smith, *National Identity,* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991: Chapter 7.

[14] Idem., p. 14.

and effects. Given the lack of consensus over the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument, we may assume that the strategies employed by political representatives with respect to rhetoric or symbolic forms were intended to neutralise conflicting opinions by projecting an alternative consensual basis for a national community, one founded on a largely abstract *idea* of nationhood. The complex rhetoric used in the commemorative speeches on the site of the Vél' d'Hiv' and the elaborate search for an ideal monumental form in Berlin were only indirectly concerned with history or memory, and essentially designed to appeal to a sense of nationhood grounded not in a strict consensus among individual opinions, but among emotional values associated with symbols of historical events, referred to by David Kertzer as a form of "solidarity without consensus". "Ritual," claims Kertzer, "is a means by which we express our social dependence; what is important in ritual is our common participation and emotional involvement, not the specific rationalizations by which we account for the rites. [...] ritual can serve political organizations by producing bonds of solidarity without requiring uniformity of belief."[15]

One of the pioneering studies on nationalism by Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication* (1953), examines the formation of national consciousness in relation to forms of social communication. "National consciousness," claims Deutsch, "is the attachment of secondary symbols of nationality to primary items of information moving through channels of social communication, or through the mind of an individual."[16] According to Deutsch, national consciousness is expressed in the form of actions, cultural artefacts or characteristics which are qualified verbally with symbolic values. Attributes such as "wit", "thoroughness", "ingenuity", or the possession of a "language", "country" or "state" are items of information which people qualify with secondary symbolic information like "French", "German" or "American". Such nationalities are conceived as "symbolic" insofar as they cannot in reality be equated with real qualities such as character attributes, languages or states. "The symbols of nationality are all in the last analysis adverbs or adjectives: they are not things or acts, but labels added to objects or actions. The words 'German' or 'Argentine' or 'English' mean nothing in themselves; they mean something only if they are understood as being added to the words 'persons', or 'language', or 'country', or 'habits and customs', or 'state'."[17] In light of Deutsch's definition, historical events could also be considered as

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[15] D. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power,* New Haven & London: Yale University Press 1988, p. 67. In similar vein, Etienne François & Hagen Schulze refer to "subliminal solidarity" *(unterschwellige Solidarität):* cf. "Das emotionale Fundament der Nationen", in: Monika Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen. Ein europäisches Panorama,* Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1998, pp. 17-32, p. 28.

[16] Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication. An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality,* Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1953, p. 172.

[17] Ibid., p.173.

"primary items of information" which are rendered national by their association with adjectives of nationality such as "French" or "German" and their transmission via national channels of communication such as the mass media, a monument situated in the capital city, or commemorations attended by presidents.

Deutsch's insistence on the linguistic constructedness of nationhood exposes the error of assuming too readily that symbols are "national". In light of this analysis, the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument are revealed to be not inherently national but *named* as such in the interest of interpreting history with respect to political aims of the 1990s. Responsibility for the round-ups at the Vél' d'Hiv' in 1942 was not national in scope, for they were ordered by German, not French authorities, and the participation of French people in the round-ups was local, involving the Parisian police force and public transport.[18] Moreover, Chirac's claim in the Vél' d'Hiv' speech of 1995 that French people are today subject to "collective fault" and "imprescriptible debt" would only be strictly valid if they had all been collectively involved, and if guilt were inherited biologically from one generation to the next. Similar arguments may be applied to the Holocaust Monument, whose organisers overstated (in the first petition) it's national political significance as a "duty for all Germans in East and West". In reality, according to opinion polls conducted in August 1995, only 35 per cent of interviewees "had heard about the debate".[19] Although public appeals to moral responsibility derived from historical lessons are justified, it is questionable whether such responsibility should be conceived in national terms, and whether single monuments are adequate supports for such pedagogical aims. In order to define these monuments literally as "national" today, one would therefore have to perform a leap of faith linking a particular historical event, embodied in a single monumental site, to a group of people who understand themselves collectively as members of a socially homogeneous and historically continuous nation. Such a link between a single symbol and a nation necessitates a process of dual sublimation in which the symbol, as a channel of "social communication", is perceived as a substitute for a historical event to which a "secondary symbol of nationality" is attached in order to lend it collective appeal in the present.

The social construction of historical symbols like the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument, which clearly became an object of social communication when embroiled in controversy, may be explained partially with Deutsch's definition of national consciousness. Although these monuments

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[18] Cf. Eric Conan & Henry Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas,* Paris: Fayard, 1994, p; 64f.

[19] Cf. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann & Renate Köcher (eds.), *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie 1993-1997,* Munich: K. G. Saur, 1997, p. 516.

acquired national significance by being *named* as such, their political significance was also established by means of additional formal mediation: the national mass media, the use of capital cities as a symbolic backdrop, and the involvement of state leaders. The political significance of the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument as sites of memory was thus determined by channels of communication - the capital city, the presence of presidents and political leaders at commemorations, and public debates conveyed by national media - which are by definition national. In other words, we charge them with symbolic value by applying the adjective "French" or "German", but they are also incorporated into a network of existent symbolic representations beyond purely linguistic labels which lend them a far more plausibly national validity than if we simply qualified them with adjectives as a projection of existing national consciousness, as suggested by Deutsch. The political significance of these monuments is not rooted in the spontaneous emotional response of people to events which took place fifty years ago, but in the present symbolic construction of historical meanings by means of emblems, speeches, exhibitions, media debates, state leaders and petitions which together convey and lend legitimacy to forms of discourse in which the public may freely participate. By observing forms of discourse and mediation, such as the relation of monuments to existing memorial symbols in capital cities, or the rhetorical sanctioning of them by national leaders and public petitions, one can see how monuments and commemorations are appropriated, how they promote the process of renegotiating and "coming to terms with the past", and therefore how they serve to incorporate the "difficult" memories of deportation and genocide into a cohesive sense of nationhood.

The reason why these monuments, rather than one of the numerous existing monuments, historical sites or commemorative dates, were designated as key "national" symbols in the 1990s appears to lie in the intensity and duration of public controversies conducted on their behalf and in the elaborate forms of their supplementary communication. It is unlikely that the site in Paris would have taken on monumental political significance if the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 association had not initially urged Mitterrand to make a formal verbal declaration, if he had not refused their request, and if Chirac had not subsequently acquiesced. Likewise, the Holocaust Monument acquired national significance due to the stringent conditions of petitions, the resitance of victim associations and political factions at local and national levels, and the irresolvable challenge of selecting a single artistic form. The quality of these sites or "focal points" of memory derives from their capacity to focus public attention on a single symbol. In the words of Deutsch, they furnish a "primary item of [historical] information" with a "secondary symbol of nationality" in the form of

the adjectives "French" or "German", but also with actual supports of the nation (the city, the president or chancellor, and the mass media). In this way, the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument evolved into two of the most expressive and politically explosive historical sites of memory of the Second World War. They convey not history, but perceptions and interpretations of history pertinent to the 1990s.

The question of whether monuments may legitimately be defined as "national" can only be answered in relation to their social and political context. No monument is inherently national, but constructed as such by ritual encodement, discourse and sublimation. The putatively national representativeness of a monument is not the result of an anonymous process or chance constellation of communication structures, however. Codes and rituals are conceived by identifiable agents pursuing specific interests, which may be illustrated on the basis of three further spheres of discourse in which these monuments emerged: generational, compensatory and post-national.

B. *Generations as "explicatory models" for founding moments of memory cultures*

Generations offer an interpretative code and sphere of discourse governing communication between participants in historical debates, who identify themselves by dissociating themselves verbally from an older generation or by promulgating lessons for future generations. It is for this reason that Pierre Nora interprets generations as an "explicatory model" *(modèle explicatif)*[20] rather than as a biological entity.[21] Nora suggests that the very notion of generations is based on a vision of history punctuated by radical ruptures which render the past perceivably more distant. In Nora's words, generations serve to "immemorialise" the past *(à immémoraliser le passé)*.[22] Perceived historical ruptures, rather than biological distinctions, categorise the past of a previous generation as a homogeneous historical block detached from the present fostering social consensus and a specific terminology. Generational consensus may thus be understood in terms analogous to the consensus built on a sense of belonging to ingroups and outgroups, yet where the distinction between "in" and "out" is temporal, between present, past and future generations. Nora defines the passage of generations as a universal paradigm of the transformation of historical experience from

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[20] Pierre Nora, "La génération", in *Les Lieux de mémoire,* III. *Les France* 1, pp. 931-971, p. 960.

[21] An example of a generational "explicatory model" is Chirac's politically motivated entreaty to a gathering of young people in 1995, when he explained the presidential election as a historic moment because the election coincided with the fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the end of the Second World War: "une époque se termine, une génération va passer la main à des hommes neufs". See Chapter II, section A.3.

that of participants *in* and witnesses *of* historical events to their retrospective historical memory and interpretation, equivalent to a "passage *intellectuel* du témoignage vécu au travail critique".[23] However, Nora qualifies this distinction by indicating that such a generational transformation may also take place within a single person in a dialectical process "d'acteurs devenus leurs propres témoins, et de nouveaux témoins transformés à leur tour en acteurs".[24] The essential thrust of Nora's argument here is that generations are not merely biological divisions, but a paradigm of interpretation, an "explicatory model" or sphere of discourse which historical actors, witnesses or analysts may adopt at will and, if necessary, express in public in order to sanction political interests.

The use of petitions by citizens' associations for both the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration in France and the Holocaust Monument in Germany reveals a close parallel between intentions underlying the monuments in each country. In both cases, petitions were made on the initiative of associations of intellectuals, writers, scientists and politicians calling for the recognition of victims and for a public symbol of war crimes, rather than on the initiative of religious, political or "ethnic" lobbies alone. It would be inaccurate to interpret these monuments as products of closed communities pursuing adversarial "identity politics".. In France, Jewish representatives such as Serge Klarsfeld and Henri Hadjenberg supported the project. The Union des Etudiants Juifs de France (UEJF) also mounted an independent campaign by staging a mock trial of "the French people"[25] in front of the Law Courts in Paris in 1992, and by launching its own petition for a speech by President Mitterrand.[26] The Berlin project initially provoked support from members of the Jewish community, including Ignatz Bubis and the architect Salomon Korn, while the World Jewish Congress initially lent their support on condition that Jewish representatives were *not* involved in the project.[27] The Central Council of Jews in Germany became actively committed to the project from 1992 in reaction to representatives of other victim groups, in particular the Romani and Sinti, who appealed for a single ecumenical monument shared by all groups.

The motivations underlying debates over both monuments have commonly been interpreted in terms of a conflict of generations, or the projection of one generation's fears and hopes onto

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[22] Nora, "La génération", p. 959.

[23] Idem., p. 964.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Cf. Philippe Bernard, "Vichy en procès", *Le Monde,* 18.7.92, p. 8.

[26] Cf. "Vichy: Les étudiants juifs attendent un geste de Mitterrand", *Libération,* 14.1.93.

[27] Cf. "Jüdischer Weltkongreß: Wir brauchen kein zentrales Denkmal", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 26.7.95, p. 4.

subsequent generations. Generational polemic underlay the arguments of Eric Conan and Henry Rousso, who interpreted the public expression of indignation over Mitterrand as an anachronism dating from the 1960s,[28] and the debate between Walser and Bubis, who clashed over the notion of the "instrumentalisation" of Auschwitz for future generations. Memory cultures are by definition constructed in the present with respect to understandings of the past and future, whether as a flight into the past in order to compensate for present disorientation, as a consolidation of tradition, or as the emancipation of future generations from an unpleasant past. However, this pattern of generational interpretation does not necessarily correspond to to the biological or social generation of spectators who interpret historical symbols. Although the average age of signatories of the first petition for the Holocaust Monument was approximately ___ years, and although most prominent participants in the debate were citizens of the former West rather than East Germany, we must distinguish between interpretations which are conditioned by the generation to which interpreters belong, and those which are based on projections for future generations, where the latter are not contingent upon the age of interpreters.

Interpretations according to the age of participants in the debates appears unreliable when we take into account the fact that more than one generation took part, including not only intellectuals and politicians but also students and schoolchildren. Pupils of the Theresienschule in Berlin even designed alternative monuments and organised an exhibition in 1997.[29] In the debate over the Holocaust Monument, traditional generational distinctions between participants or witnesses on the one hand and non-witnesses on the other were blurred. Chancellor Kohl (born 1930) consistently supported the project and was instrumental in selecting prizewinning models in the competitions of 1995 and 1998. His successor Chancellor Schröder (born 1944) initially opposed the project and only supported it following the election of September 1998, under the advice of the new State Minister for Culture, Michael Naumann. Other factors, independent of the generation of participants, governed attitudes to the monuments. Schröder and Naumann's decision first to oppose then, following the election, to support the project was a politically motivated manoeuvre calculated to appeal to public opinion. Having sought to put a decisive end to the punctilious debate prior to the 1998 elections, they could expect to win votes on both the Right and the Left. While the right-wing Deutsche Volksunion (DVU) campaigned in its journal *Deutsche*

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[28] Eric Conan's and Henry Rousso's polemic critique of a generation "obsessed" with the crimes of their parents' generation, described as "anciens soixante-huitards", for example, appears to be founded not on interpretative argument but on the compartmentalisation, according to age-groups, of a historical attitude. Cf. Conan & Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas,* p. 37.

[29] See catalogue of exhibition: M. Zech & A. Kühler, *Ein Zentrales Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas?* Berlin: Berliner Institut für Lehrerfort- und -weiterbildung und Schulentwicklung, 1997.

National-Zeitung almost weekly in 1997 and 1998 for the suspension of the project, prominent intellectuals including Walter Jens and György Konrad (successive presidents of the Academy of Arts), rejected the project on aesthetic grounds, in particular on account of the designated size and anachronistic monumentality of the short-listed models. Protest by associations and Jewish organisations, and the debate between Walser and Bubis in late 1998 nevertheless convinced the new federal government of the political necessity of the monument as a symbolic gesture in memory of victims, but primarily as a political bulwark against public sympathy with those, like Walser, who adopted the stance of a victim of moral intimidation resulting from the ritual public acts of remembering war crimes. In his speech on receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade Association, Walser deplored such ritual remembrance as "routine threats", "a means of intimidations", a moral cudgel", and "ritual duty".[30]

The fact that *different* generations of political leaders commonly supported campaigns for commemorations suggests that immediate political interests had a greater influence on their interpretations than the sense of belonging to a particular generation. Kohl, followed by Schröder, both supported the project for similar reasons. Mitterrand and Chirac likewise oversaw the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration for similar reasons. Chirac attended ceremonies from 1986, and held the historic speech in 1995; Mitterrand instigated the commemoration in 1992, the national commemorative day in 1993, and the monument in 1994. Only their verbal justifications differed, which led to diametrically opposed evaluations of their historical interpretations in the press. The generations to which participants belong offer a less effective tool for interpreting the use of commemorations and monuments than politically motivated projections of generations as "explicatory models" of history.

Both the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument were thus used as projection surfaces for interpretations of crimes of the Second World War in relation to origins of contemporary political cultures, which provided historical orientation for generations in the 1990s regardless of their age, such as the French Revolution, the end of the Second World War or the end of the Cold War. The pedagogical values of these symbols and debates lay not in their inherent significance but in their catalytic function, inciting people to reflect on the event, its forms of transmission and their personal understanding of it - an event which constitutes the most radical rupture in the contemporary history of both France and Germany and which lies at the origin of state

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[30]   "Drohroutine", "Einschüchterungsmittel", "Moralkeule", "Pflichtübung". See: Martin Walser, "Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede", *Frankfurter Rundschau,* 12.10.98, p. 10.

constitutions. For this reason, the interpretation of these commemorations made by political leaders was paramount. In France, Mitterrand justified his refusal to make the speech in 1992 by reasserting the primacy of the founding moment of 1789 and republican tradition, in which the Vichy regime constituted a historical interruption without legal foundation (the Republican constitution was suspended from 1940-44), and by recalling the extensive reparations achieved during the purges of 1944-45: "Alors, ne lui demandez pas de comptes, à cette République! Elle a fait ce qu'elle devait. C'est la République qui a, pratiquement, depuis deux siècles où les Républiques se sont succédé, décidé toutes les mesures d'égalité, de citoyenneté."[31] Chirac also reasserted the origin of 1789 and republican tradition, albeit while acknowledging the legality of the Vichy regime (the republican parliament voted the dissolution of the constitution in July 1940) and racism generally, where the verbal assertion of republican tradition served as a negation of Vichy. In this way, despite conflict between the presidents over historical interpretation, they pursued similar strategies, each asserting the primacy of one origin and tradition of the nation over another. Though similar in their historical content, the interpretations of the two presidents differed essentially in their type of historiographical discourse. Chirac adopted a mode of confession and retribution by making an explicit verbal reference to legal, moral and political continuities linking the republic to the Vichy regime, yet by appealing to a transcendental principle of the nation as a carrier of universal enlightenment ideas in contrast to Vichy as a momentary historical principle. In contrast, Mitterrand adopted a mode of denial, by making non-verbal symbolic gestures of recognition of deportations without reference to specific moral lessons to be drawn from the Vichy regime for the Fifth Republic. Whereas Chirac countered the historical principle of Vichy with a transcendental principle of nationhood, Mitterrand countered a historical principle of Vichy with a historical principle of the republic which, he claimed, had already made amends for damages in the post-war purges. Hence his emphatic refusal to express acknowledgement of the crimes in the name of the Fifth Republic in 1992.

Discourse over the Holocaust Monument in Berlin may also be interpreted in light of perceived national origins, derived from historical caesuras following the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the East German regime in 1989. The fall of the wall in 1989 and the official unification of Germany on 3 October 1990[32] presented the nation with new symbolic origins, new historical and constitutional anniversary days which did not supplant, but certainly

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[31] François Mitterrand, annual presidential declaration of 14 July 1992. Cf. "'De mauvaises moeurs se sont répandues partout, y compris dans la justice'", *Le Monde,* 16.7.92, pp. 6-7.

rivalled those of the post-war years, including 8 May 1945 (end of Second World War), 24 May 1949 (introduction of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany) or 7 October 1949 (introduction of the constitution of the German Democratic Republic). In retrospect, we may identify 1945 and 1949, or 1989 and 1990, equally as national historical and constitutional origins and points of reference for the contemporary memory culture. Each set of historical reference points, or even both sets in conjunction, act as focal points of memories and therefore as explicatory models of generations since 1989. The campaign to build the Holocaust Monument acquired additional significance in the 1990s as an attempt to maintain a bold symbol of the genocide of the Second World War in the "new" Federal Republic of Germany; a means of symbolically compensating the origins of the new state with the memory of the origins of the old state, and thus reconciling "Holocaust-identity" with a "normal-national-identity".[33]

Since the memory culture of the united Germany confronts citizens from both East and West Germany with common symbolic points of reference, we may interpret the debate over the Holocaust Monument as a focal point for the renegotiation of the function of the genocide against Jews in the state memory of the Federal Republic since 1990. This process was not characterised by a binary confrontation between generations of the "old" FRG and their parents or grandparents, but by an attempt to project for future generations a national symbol of the genocide which is not a remnant of either of the two former states, but a unique gesture of political unity. This gesture integrated the memory of genocide into a state which now possesses an additional founding moment in the years 1989 and 1990. Whereas debates over the status of political traditions in Germany, derived from the Weimar Republic, the revolution of 1848, or the workers' revolt in East Berlin on 17 June 1953, for example, offer symbolic points of reference which are either not recognised nationwide or rouse only weak emotional bonds, there appears to be strong consensus over the significance of the constitutional and historical origins of 1945/49 and 1989/90 in the new Federal Republic, as reflected in the intense debate over the Holocaust Monument since unification. In spite of, if not as a *result* of controversy, this monument has been construed by its advocates as a reconciliatory site of memory of both the post-war generation, marked by national division, and the post-Cold War generation, marked by national unity. Its site, on the former no-man's-land dividing East and West Berlin, is today a more poignant symbol of the dual unity of the

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[32] Designated "Tag der deutschen Einheit", which displaced 17 June as the national day of commemoration.

[33] Edgar Wolfrum is referring here to opposed camps of the historians' debate *(Historikerstreit)* which took place in 1986. These definitions also apply to the debate over the Holocaust Monument. Cf. Edgar Wolfrum, "Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949-1989. Phasen und Kontroversen", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 45, 1998, pp. 3-15, p. 15. Christina von Braun pleaded in similar terms for the Topographie des

new FRG because it was once a symbol of national division. Both the French and German monuments function as symbolic points of historical orientation for contemporary memory cultures with respect to founding moments. Debate over the Vél' d'Hiv' was characterised by the relativisation of the republican origins in 1789 and the legacy of the Vichy regime since 1944. Debate over the Holocaust Monument focused on form and procedure, but also on the relative status of 1945 and 1989 as founding moments of the memory culture in Germany.

This analysis of the first stage of the elaborate process by which these monuments acquired political significance shows how generations are used as "explicatory models" projected onto historical commemorations. However, caution is necessary when applying a generational model of interpretation. Commemorations may only partially be explained as a reflection of the attempt of one generation to transmit historical information to future generations, for commemorative ritual and monuments - narrative or aesthetic entities - cannot prescribe their own reception, and therefore do not guarantee the maintenance of a given memory culture. Commemorative artefacts do not *reflect* mimetically the attitudes and historical experiences of their creators, but serve as a pretext or projection surface against which contemporary interpreters of all generations explain history discursively, and thereby situate themselves with respect to ideological points of reference such as "1789", "1945" or "1989". In short, the meaning of monuments is acquired in a process of interaction between objects and their multiple interpretations. Commemorative artefacts are contingent on, but not reducible to political interests.

C. Religious codes: the verbal construction of monuments as a means of reparation

Prior to the culmination of the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration with Chirac's speech of 1995 and the decision to construct the Holocaust Monument in 1999, these sites were rendered public not by their physical presence but by rhetorical speculations on the forms in which deportation and genocide may be commemorated and remembered in the future. The Holocaust Monument in particular existed only in the forms of an empty building site, a series of architectural blueprints, and rhetorical speculation on modes of historical commemoration which focused attention on a succession of public controversies. The verbal codes in which both campaigns were conducted in petitions soliciting verbal and sculptural responses thus offer a key to understanding the origin, significance and function of the monuments themselves.

Terrors memorial in 1990 as a reconciliation of "good" and "bad" history: cf. Stephanie Endlich, *Die Zukunft des Berliner 'Prinz-Albrecht-*

The first petition of the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42, which initiated the debate in France, established a single condition governing the entire three-year long debate. It requested the president to officially recognise in a verbal statement the responsibility of the Vichy regime: "que l'Etat français de Vichy est responsable de persécutions et de crimes contre les juifs de France."[34] The mere presence of the president at the ceremony was considered to be an inadequate gesture; the petition called exclusively for a *verbal* statement, anticipated as the corrective of an "unsaid thing" *(non-dit),* which would symbolically cure "la mémoire collective française", "l'idée même de la République française", and "ses principes fondateurs".[35] The second petition of July 1992 reiterated the indictment, emphasising that no such gesture had previously been made by a president, so that a "silence officiel" should be corrected by a "déclaration solennelle".[36] Moreover, this petition stated explicitly that gestures such as the laying of a wreath or the legal indictment of individuals were unsatisfactory; the sole and absolute condition defined the president's verbal utterance as an "acte politique engageant la Nation toute entière".[37] The fact that the logic of these petitions was adhered to in the subsequent debate reflects the authority ascribed to petitions, and procedural mechanisms governing contemporary memory cultures. Exclusive emphasis on the spoken word, the appointment of the president as a spokesman of the moral conscience of the nation, the suggestion that a solemn declaration may compensate for collective fault, and the fidelity with which the contents of petitions were accepted as a moral authority prescribing the norms of argumentation, shows that the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration was governed by rules analogous to religious protocol, insofar as Chirac's compliance with demands in 1995 was analogous to a declaration of faith in the conditions of petitions, and therefore in the authority of the presidential word to stand for the collective attitude of the nation.

Members of Perspektive Berlin likewise justified their campaign for a Holocaust Monument first as compensation for the lack of a monument and, by implication, as a symbolic form of collective moral reparation. According to the initial organisers Lea Rosh and Eberhard Jäckel, the idea for the project arose on a visit to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, during preparation for a documentary film. "Es müsse," claimed Jäckel, "im Land der Täter ein ähnliches Denkmal geben wie hier im Land der Opfer," whereupon Rosh replied "daß ich aber sehr wohl verstünde, weshalb

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Geländes' ('Gestapo-Geländes')", Berlin: Senatsverwaltung für Kulturelle Angelegenheiten & Berliner Festspiele, 1990, p. 34.

[34] First petition of the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42, "Un appel est lancé à M. Mitterrand pour que soient reconnus officiellement les 'persécutions' et les 'crimes de Vichy contre les juifs'", *Le Monde,* 17.6.92, p. 10.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Second petition of the Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42, "Le Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 : l'Etat est 'sourd'", *Le Monde,* 16.7.92, p. 8.

wir im Land der Täter ein solches Denkmal, eine solche Gedenkstätte noch nicht hätten. DIESE TAT sei zu groß, noch zu nahe, die Schuld zu schwer, die Täter noch unter uns."[38] "Es gibt in fast allen europäischen Ländern Gedenkstätten und Mahnmale für die ermordeten Juden," claimed Rosh in 1989, "in Deutschland, im Land der Täter, gibt es das nicht."[39] The initial plan to build this monument was therefore based on the *comparison* of national forms of commemoration and the *equation* of the existence of a monument with the moral rectitude of the nation. The equation of the lack of a monument with the lack of collective dignity governed the first stages of the campaign. The banner erected to draw attention to street collections and discussions from 1988, for example, read: "Perspektive Berlin e.V. fordert: *Endlich* ein Holocaust-Mahnmal auf dem ehemaligen Gestapo-Gelände!"[40] Petitions published in regional and national newspapers from January 1989 likewise focused on the lack of a central monument, interpreted as a "disgrace": "Ein halbes Jahrhundert ist seit der Machtübernahme der Nazis und dem Mord an den Juden Europas vergangen. Aber auf deutschem Boden, im Land der Täter, gibt es bis heute keine zentrale Gedenkstätte, die an diesen einmaligen Völkermord, und kein Mahnmal, das an die Opfer erinnert. Das ist eine Schande."[41] Successive petitions in the first half of 1989 began with a moral appeal to compensate this symbolic lack, to put something right which was previously supposed to be wrong. The project for the monument served the organisers as a symbolic pretext on which to project, by means of repeated verbal assertions, a sense of the persisting unexpiated guilt or insufficient reconciliation of the nation, expressed in the petition as a "Verpflictung für alle Deutschen in Ost und West". However, the fact that there already existed in 1989 a number of monuments and memorials to the victims of genocide also suggests that the lack to which the campaign for the monument repeatedly referred pertained less to the monument itself than to the specific *centrality* of its situation and its status as a national symbol for all citizens. The originality of this monument lay not in the fact that it was the first to commemorate victims, as extolled by petitioners, but in its political function, "auf deutschem Boden, im Land der Täter, [...] in Berlin," and as "eine Verpflichtung für alle Deutschen in Ost und West".[42] Prior to the campaign of Perspektive Berlin from 1989, discussions about the potential use of the Prince-Albrecht Palace site had already been

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Lea Rosh, "Ein Denkmal im Lande der Täter", in Bürgerinitiative Perspektive Berlin e.V. (ed.), *Ein Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas. Dokumentation 1988-1995,* broshure, Berlin, 1995, pp. 3-7, p. 3.

[39] Quoted in Hartwig Maack, "Politische Weichen gestellt", *Berliner Volksblatt,* 20.4.89, p. 12.

[40] My italics. Cf. Bürgerinitiative Perspektive Berlin e.V. (ed.), *Ein Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas. Dokumentation 1988-1995,* p. 12f.

[41] "Aufruf", *Frankfurter Rundschau,* 30.1.89, p. 4. See appendix 3.

conducted locally over a period of almost ten years, during which the question of the putative geographical and political centrality of the site had played no role. The essential difference between the campaign of this association to mark the site of the Prince-Albrecht Palace with a monument before and after 1989 lay primarily in the verbally projected status of *centrality*. The specific centrality of the site, which played a key role in the debate after 1989, was an invention of the petitioners from Perspektive Berlin, though not inherent to the site as such. Although both the Prince Albrecht site and the site south of the Brandenburg Gate are "central" to the city, the political status of each site is one of discursive construction and perception which is not *given* by its geographical position. The former was perceived as a memorial with no exceptional status, the latter as "the" central memorial.

The conditions established in both the French and German petitions determined the terms and issues of the ensuing debates. Both appeals overstated the political significance of the sites by suggesting that they were a direct reflection of the moral status of the entire nation. The petitions' expression of moral indignation over the lack of a public speech or monument therefore implied that the fulfilment of these conditions would effectively atone for the crime on behalf of the nation as a whole ("la nation entière"; "eine Verpflichtung für alle Deutschen"). Although it was true that state leaders had not previously acknowledged the crimes of Vichy in this solemn fashion, the petition was designed to provoke public indignation by associating this gesture with a reparation of the collective conscience of the nation. And although the claim that there existed no memorial in Germany commemorating Jewish victims was inaccurate, and ignored the presence of memorials for Jewish victims in Berlin - in the Große Hamburger Straße (1985), on the site of the former synagogue in the Levetzow Straße (1988), and at the Grunewald S-Bahn station (plaque installed in 1973, a monument in 1991 and an additional monument in 1998) - the gesture of indictment claiming a lack of monument sufficed to engage the public imagination. The desire to correct a *lack,* to which both petitions appealed, applied specifically to the call for a presidential speech in France, and to a central national monument for Jewish victims in Germany, but was interpreted as an innate shortcoming of national memory in itself. These criteria, the presidential verbal gesture and symbolic centrality of the monument, were the only original aspects of each campaign. As a consequence, the equation of each site with the collective moral status of the nation was unjustified. Both projects were nevertheless conducted in the form of a moral litigation on the premise that the fulfilment of these symbolic conditions would morally expiate the nation. The

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42 Ibid.

focus of criminality was displaced from deportations and genocide to the lack of a public speech and central monument, the culprits defined as the French and German nations in the 1990s, and the desired reparations conceived as symbols which should fulfil a "duty" in Germany and "cure" "collective memory" in France.

The principle of both petitions, based on the identification of a crime, a guilty collective subject and a condition for atonement by means of a symbolic gesture, whether rhetorical or monumental, is founded on a religious doctrine of salvation. However, critics of the Holocaust Monument have already pointed out that the dilemma arising when equating commemorations or monuments with the fulfilment of anticipated collective salvation is that there exists no consensus on the secular moral authority determining the conditions of reconciliation. "Welche innerweltliche Instanz," asks Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper, "ist autorisiert, die Bußwilligkeit der Denkmalsetzer oder gar des deutschen Volkes zu honorieren? Die Nachkommen der Opfer? Der Staat Israel? Die Gemeinschaft der Guten in der Welt? Und ist nicht mit dem millionenfachen Mord an den Juden 'etwas geschehen, das sich durch die üblichen Rituale nachträglicher Reue nicht wiedergutmachen läßt' (Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner)?"[43] The responses to petitions, which echoed the doctrine of salvation, suggest that the combination of petitions and the state won broad acceptance as authorities over the administration of historical symbols. Mitterrand refused to make the speech in order to strictly dissociate the French State of Vichy from successive republican states, and therefore to avoid bringing disgrace on the republic. Chirac, on the other hand, made a subtle defense of the republic in his speech of 1995 by acknowledging and negating Vichy as a historical principle while reasserting republican ideals and France as an ideal transcendental principle, that is, by praising timeless moral values of a personified yet eternal nation and reiterating de Gaulle's doctrine of a "certaine idée de la France". Responses to the campaign for the Holocaust Monument also promised salvation by conforming to the terms in which the petition had been formulated. The competitions to select a monument here reached a conclusion only when state representatives intervened in debates and competitions. However, members of the Bundestag claimed to respect the conditions of petitions by renouncing their personal responsibility in choosing a monument and claiming it should be a work of art or architecture, and that only specialists in these fields were competent to decide what type of monument should be built. Moreover, political debate here did not initially broach the theme of the status of the nation as in France, but focused instead on

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[43] Cf. Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper, "Der geliehene Schmerz", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 13.2.97, p. 36. For further studies on memory of the genocide as a civil religion, see Georges Bensoussan, Michael Bernstein & Micha Brumlik (bibliography).

procedure required to reach a decision, while delegating the responsibility for selecting a monument to artists. The debate over the Holocaust Monument acquired an explicitly political dimension only in 1998 on the occasion of the Walser-Bubis debate and the Bundestag debate of June 1999. Although both the Vél' d'Hiv' and the Holocaust Monument were initiated by the petitions of citizens' action groups, they each appealed to different mediators of symbolic reparation. The Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 appealed directly to the authority of the rhetoric of state leaders, whereas Perspektive Berlin appealed to the authority of a monument in itself. The acceptance of state authority as a mediation of alleged salvation in France, and the preference to engage the authority of symbolic representation rather than that of the state in Germany, constitute the single most pronounced difference between the institutional administrations of these memory cultures.

The literary critic Michael Bernstein argues that the "Shoah" has acquired the status of a universal ideology, an authority in its own right widely accepted without the medium of a worldly representative authority: the "ultimate negative truth", a "single all-encompassing standard" or "perverse veneration of 'the final solution' as a fitting 'final judgment' before which all our beliefs and practices must ultimately be weighed."[44] One might presume that a monument may only weigh upon "beliefs and practices" if it is visited, if it has an effect on visitors, or if it is talked about in public. However, the debates accompanying the production and inauguration of these monuments showed that production in itself, rather than reception, was conceived as a condition for national salvation. In these specific cases, moral authority did not stem from the "Shoah" as a general abstract principle, as Bernstein suggests, or from the descendants of victims, the Israeli state or the "community of the good", as Dolff-Bonekämper suggests, but from its forms of mediation: published *petitions* in the name of their signatories, and the states of countries in which the monuments were built. Although the conditions of the petitions - the supposition that the delivery of a speech in France or the possession of a monument in Germany would expiate an entire nation - were arbitrary, they were the initial and single most determinant authority of both debates, and fixed standards to which political and intellectual elites subsequently adhered. The zeal with which participants in the debates either adhered to or doubted the terms of the petitions thus accorded them the status of religious scripture.

D. Negative compensation

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[44] Michael Bernstein, "Homage to the extreme. The Shoah and the rhetoric of catastrophe", *The Times Literary Supplement,* 6.3.98, pp. 6-8, p. 8.

As noted above, both the Paris and Berlin monuments were perceived as means of compensating or fulfilling a lack of urban memorials to Jewish victims of the Second World War. Sibyl Milton suggests that the central "Mémorial aux Martyrs de la Déportation" in Paris, which universalises the notion of deportation by making no specific mention of Jewish deportees, is a symbolic "obfuscation of Jewish victims".[45] The Vél' d'Hiv' memorial could therefore be interpreted as the compensation for an urban, monumental obfuscation. It redresses the balance of previous memorials by referring explicitly and exclusively to the religion of one group of victims. The complex signification accorded to the monument by politicians like Chirac nevertheless shows how commemoration of the nation's war crimes does not undermine national self-understanding, which is reinterpreted, by negation, as a source of moral salvation for the nation. Memories of historical crimes which potentially subvert the moral legitimacy of the nation are thus integrated and neutralised as a "negatively valued event of historical reference"[46] in relation to other, positive events or values, a phenomenon which will be explained in more detail later in this section.

The drive to build monuments in memory of Jewish victims has different causes in each country. In France, this trend may be explained as a reaction to the earlier occultation of Jewish memories under de Gaulle, exemplified by the Mémorial de la Déportation on the Ile de la Cité. In the Mémorial aux Martyrs de la Déportation in Paris, victims are universalised in a tomb containing an unknown victim, yet identified as members of a particular nation, referred to as "French" deportees. In Germany, the Holocaust Monument may be understood as a reaction to previously inadequate distinctions made between the identity of perpetrators and victims, exemplified by the Neue Wache monument, whose inscription "Den Opfern von Krieg und Gewaltherrschaft" symbolically amalgamates all categories of victims, including fallen soldiers. In both cases, memories of victims were coupled with memories of the nation as a perpetrator, and thus challenged conventional techniques of commemoration. There are several ways in which victims have been conceived traditionally in monuments or commemorations. In war memorials of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century following the First World War, they were often mourned as victims of foreign aggression, soldiers who died in defence of their own nation. This victim cult served the positive assertion of nationhood. After the Second World War, the victim cult underwent a transformation. The Buchenwald national memorial was erected in 1958 in the

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[45] Sibyl Milton, *In Fitting Memory. The Art and Politics of Holocaust Memorials,* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991, p. 9.

GDR in memory of anti-fascist victims, while plans for a national "Memorial in Honour of the Dead" *(Mahnmal zur Ehrung der Toten)* in Bonn in 1985 were not realised, in part due to dispute over the unspecific dedication to victims.[47] The newly inaugurated Neue Wache (1993) in Berlin represents a turning point in the representation of victims. Having first been dedicated in universal terms to "victims of war and tyranny", public protest spurred the government to add a bronze plaque naming victims in terms of their membership of a group, whether Jews, Romani and Sinti, euthanasia victims, homosexuals or political resistants. One of the reasons for the suspension of the Holocaust Monument project in 1995 and 1998 was confusion over the question whether a single monument for Jewish and for Romani and Sinti victims together, or even for *all* victim groups collectively would not detract from the historical specificity of the victimisation of each of these groups.

We are faced here with an expression of what Michel Wieviorka calls the "ethnicisation of the diaspora",[48] where communitarian discourse is employed by state representatives in order to offer symbolic recognition of "ethnic" minorities. Chirac's speech of 1995, which verbally "grafted" the political issue of exclusion in the 1990s onto the historical issue of the social exclusion of Jews in the 1940s, is an example of this. These monuments also project an image of Judaism which is exclusively one of victimisation. The comparative novelty of both the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument lies in their equal focus on victims and perpetrators, and in the fact that the commemorations were inaugurated in the name of the successor states of the Axis powers in which the monuments are situated. They thus embody the symbolic integration of the "other" into a repertoire of national commemorations, and confront the nation with its moral negation. The philosopher Jürgen Habermas interprets this as a "Trend zu einem dezentrierten, die verletzten anderen einbeziehenden kollektiven Selbstverständnis. [...] Mit diesem Wandel im kollektiven Selbstverständnis holt der Universalismus des demokratischen Verfassungsstaates den Partikularismus des mit ihm verschwisterten Nationalbewußtseins ein, indem er dieses gleichsam von innen umstrukturiert. Die Nationen bekommen die postnationale Konstellation auch auf diese Weise zu spüren".[49]

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[46] "Negativ bewertetes Bezugsereignis". Cf. M. Rainer Lepsius, "Das Erbe des Nationalsozialismus und die politische Kultur der Nachfolgestaaten des 'Großdeutschen Reiches'", in Lepsius, *Demokratie in Deutschland,* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993, pp. 229-245, p. 229.

[47] Cf. Michael Jeismann, "Zeichenlehre", in Jeismann (ed.), *Mahnmal Mitte: Eine Kontroverse,* Cologne: DuMont, 1999, pp. 7-31, p. 13.

[48] Michel Wieviorka, "La transformation des juifs", *Le Débat* 98, January-February 1998, pp. 177-180, p. 177.

[49] Jürgen Habermas, "Der Zeigefinger. Die Deutschen und ihr Denkmal", *Die Zeit*, 31.3.99, pp. 42-44, p. 44.

These monument debates require us to consider how national self-understanding has been renegotiated and rearticulated with respect to images of the "injured other". Conventional structures of national self-understanding are founded on a sense of "us" and "them", on ingroups and outgroups[50] which mutually identify themselves as the negation of an imagined other or enemy *beyond* its boundaries. As Habermas points out, however, the Holocaust Monument, like the Vél' d'Hiv', introduces "injured others" symbolically into the nation's historical repertoire. Both monuments are designated as central and national, but nevertheless commemorate the nation's persecution of victims. A formerly archetypal outgroup, and the moral depravity of the nation, are thereby given a central visible sign by means of a commemorative convention traditionally reserved for a national *cult,* whether of national triumphs, heroes or dead soldiers. Such symbols do not reverse history by transforming the former outgroup into an ingroup, but represent a symbolic gesture of recognition, apology and compensation and thereby subvert the conventional function of monuments as focal points of positive identification.

In psychological terms, a "compensation" is a mechanism by which individuals conceal a weakness or defect. In historical terms, memory cultures compensate present-day disorientation by recalling a glorious past or by satisfying nostalgia with a sense of security offered by relics from the past.[51] Representations of national histories likewise testify to a simplification or manipulation of the past in order to sustain myths in the present. The notions of the compensation of a present weakness and the simplification of the past are both expressed in the art historian Stefan Gremer's explanation of the function of nineteenth century historicist art as a "cover-memory" *(Deckerinnerung).*[52] A similar principle underlies the state promotion of "heritage" in Britain and "patrimony" in France, in which historical artefacts offer a source of leisure activity to satisfy a demand for escapism from the present to the past and participation in tradition via historical tourism.[53] Memory cultures since the 1970s have almost invariably been interpreted in these terms, as a form of affirmative compensation for political disorientation in the present, but also as the selective rearticulation and consolidation of tradition (see Chapter I, section B.1). However, the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument disrupt the conventional principle of compensation and

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[50] Michael Billig, "Nationalism as an International Ideology: Imagining the Nation, Others and the World of Nations", in: Glynis Breakwell & Evanthia Lyons (eds), *Changing European Identities: Social Psychological Analyses of Social Change,* Oxford: Buttersworth-Heinemann, 1996, pp. 181-194, p. 187; & Billig, *Banal Nationalism,* London: Sage, 1995: Chapter 4.

[51] David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 384-389.

[52] Cf. Stefan Gremer, "Retrovision: die rückblickende Erfindung der Nationen durch die Kunst", in: Monika Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen. Ein europäisches Panorama,* pp. 32-52, p. 34.

[53] Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, London: Viking, 1996, p. 6f.

consolidation. They offer neither consolation in the past nor support for positive memories. Only by means of elaborate mechanisms of interpretation on the basis of speeches, exhibitions, petitions, media reports and public forums were these unorthodox sites of memory rendered publicly acceptable and thus accommodated to existing memory cultures. These prolonged discursive processes of reception - whether "normalised" by relativisation (as in France), or maintained for several years as objects of dispute (as in Germany) - were not provoked by the inherent nature of the monuments, but induced by a public receptive to the relevance of these historical issues and the willingness to engage in the interpretation of their commemorative transmission.

Having established that the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument redress an apparent lack of monuments to Jewish victims, that they are novel insofar as they integrate war crimes into an existent repertoire of of symbolic elements and therefore modify the conventional compensatory and consolidative function of commemorations, we may ask more specifically how they were understood in relation to national self-understanding. The Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument could be interpreted as expressions of "negative nationalism". According to Walter Reese-Schäfer, negative nationalism is a latent sense of national belonging or "verdeckter Nationalismus"[54] underlying the willing acceptance of the division of Germany before 1989 as a just form of punishment for crimes committed by the National Socialists. "Die Teilung konnte aber als Strafe nur von jemandem empfunden werden, der die Einheit noch wünschte. Für jemanden, der die Zweistaatlichkeit als selbstverständlich hingenommen hatte, war sie keine Strafe mehr. Die Denkfigur der Teilung als Strafe setzte also die Vorstellung bzw. das Gefühl der Einheit voraus. Es handelte sich um eine Art *negatives Nationalstaatsdenken*."[55] Reese-Schäfer goes on to question why the moral legacy of genocide is consistently interpreted and taken for granted as a *national* legacy rather than as that of a movement, party or individuals, and concludes that moral inheritance is primarily an individual responsibility, which lies "bei jedem einzelnen Deutschen [...], der sich zugehörig und verantwortlich fühlt oder fühlen sollte".[56] In similar vein, Michael Billig claims that the very concept of "nation" is often founded on little more than a "common-sense assumption" perceived as *natural* and unquestionable, but which does not accurately describe the social group in

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[54] Walter Reese-Schäfer, "Universalismus, negativer Nationalismus und die neue Einheit der Deutschen", in Petra Braitling & Walter Reese-Schäfer (eds), *Universalismus, negativer Nationalismus und die neue Einheit der Deutschen,* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1991, pp. 39-54, p. 46.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Idem. 47.

question or its political relevance.[57] The pattern of the dual commemorative reception of war crimes, described by Reese-Schäfer as a mechanical assumption that moral responsibility for historical events is inherited collectively by nations on the one hand, and a critical acceptance of individual responsibility on the other, is reflected in the public interpretations of the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument. Mitterrand and Chirac both understood the conditions of the petitions literally, in which the commemorative speech was anticipated as reparation for the collective moral status of the nation, and acted accordingly in their handling of the commemorations. By contrast, Lionel Jospin rejected the fundamental premise of the petitions, insisting that moral responsibility is not transmitted biologically by national, collective organisms, but by an "administration": "des responsables politiques, des administrateurs, des juges, des policiers, des gendarmes."[58] Although French people were not subjected to the "punishment" of state division after 1945 as in Germany, the Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration also constituted a "negatively valued event of historical reference" against which politicians projected a positive holistic notion of nationhood.

Debate over the Holocaust Monument was more complex, involved more decision-makers, and was therefore less consensual and lasted longer than that over the Vél' d'Hiv'. Some welcomed this monument as a symbol of the quashing of nationalism, while others disapproved of it as an expression of latent or negative nationalism. Lea Rosh, for example, justified the monument as an expression of the "antinationalist attitude" among people who had "faced up to" history: "Diese geänderte und sich ständig verändernde, antinationalistische Einstellung, diese Bereitschaft, sich der Geschichte und der Last dieser Geschichte zu stellen, manifestiert sich in diesem Prozeß um die Entstehungsgeschichte dieses Denkmals."[59] Rosh's apparently contradictory appeal for a central, *national* monument testifying to an "*anti*nationalist attitude" may be understood in political and historical terms. In political terms, Rosh was attacking right-wing objections to the monument as an expression of unpatriotic sentiment. In historical terms, she understood the monument as antinationalist because it recognised victims of crimes of extreme nationalism and thus integrated symbolically the *negation* of criminal nationalism as a positive moral and political legacy for the post-war democratic nation. Whereas Rosh apprehended the monument in a positive manner as a symbolic negation of the period from 1933-45, critics on the Left interpreted it as an expression of a new national (though not necessarily nationalist) ideology. Eike Geisel, writing for *Junge Welt,*

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[57] Cf. Billig, *Banal Nationalism,* p. 15.

[58] Lionel Jospin, "Un gouvernement, une administration de notre pays, ont alors commis l'irréparable", *Le Monde,* 22.7.97, p. 8.

[59] Lea Rosh, "Ein Denkmal im Lande der Täter", p. 7.

the journal of the former Freie Deutsche Jugend (the youth movement of the GDR), opposed the Holocaust Monument project on the grounds that it would exploit a symbol of genocide as the foundation of a sense of national community, evoking "dead Jews as a source of cohesion for the national collective. [...] Such that the ashes of murdered people become the basis on which the new nationalism builds a good conscience".[60] Jürgen Habermas formulated this dilemma in less polemic terms by pleading to temper processes of self-assertion based on the relativisation of undesirable memories: "The unconditionally moral impulse to remembrance must not be relativised within the context of self-reassurance."[61]

The contradiction between interpretations of the Holocaust Monument, as either a support for or infringement of national self-understanding, divided intellectuals and politicians and remained unresolved throughout the debate. Is the symbolic recognition of victims of past nationalism, as Rosh claims, tantamount to an anti-nationalist attitude in the present? Or does the public condemnation of past wrongs underpin a sense of complacent national identity in the present? These apparently insurmountable contradictions even caused several intellectuals to change camps, by supporting the project in its early stages and opposing it after the escalation of public interest in 1995.[62] They justified their position in similar terms to those expressed by Geisel and Habermas, albeit by combining political and aesthetic arguments, calling for a smaller, politically and aesthetically "modest" monument which might foster memory and enlightenment rather than "ein Ort eher der Ablenkung, der Entwirklichung und kalten Abstraktion".[63] The designated SPD Federal Cultural Representative, Michael Naumann, followed this argumentation by rejecting the project as a "gigantisch-monumentale Versteinerung".[64] Formal arguments against the project suggested that large monuments without integrated pedagogy relating to historical traces did not induce people to remember but to forget. "Ein Denkmal in den Dimensionen, wie es sich die Perspektive Berlin vorstellt," claimed Christine Fischer-Defoy of the association Aktives Museum as early as 1990, "würde das Problem Prinz-Albrecht-Gelände mit einem Schlag erledigen. Je teurer und imposanter es wird, um so eher die Neigung der Öffentlichkeit, dieses

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[60] Eike Geisel, "Lebenshilfe von toten Juden", *Junge Welt,* 14.5.94.

[61] Habermas, "Der Zeigefinger. Die Deutschen und ihr Denkmal", p. 43.

[62] The former chairman of the selection jury for the monument, Walter Jens, and his successor as president of the Academy of Arts, György Konrad, both revoked their support of the project in an open letter in February 1998, signed by eighteen intellectuals: "'Aus Einsicht verzichten'", *Der Tagesspiegel,* 4.2.98, p. 25. See also: Jens, "In letzte Minute. Mein Widerruf zum Holocaust-Mahnmal", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 7.2.98, p. 33; Konrad, "Abschied von der Chimäre. Wider das Holocaust-Denkmal", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 26.11.97, p. 41.

[63] Cf. Open letter, "'Aus Einsicht verzichten'", *Der Tagesspiegel*, 4.2.98, p. 25.

[64] Michael Naumann, inteviewed on Deutschlandradio, 21.7.98.

Kapitel nun endlich abzuhaken. Die Alternative kann nur ein Gesamtkonzept sein, das das Gelände in allen seinen Dimensionen erfaßt."[65]

The insurmountably contradictory interpretations of this monument project, welcomed as an official symbolic recognition of Jewish victims of genocide yet opposed on account of its monumental size (20000m^2) recalling crimes yet cast in a conventional commemorative genre, and which is national yet antinationalist, is perhaps the prime reason why controversy over this monument remained irresolvable for ten years. The dilemma at the root of the prolonged debate over the Holocaust Monument has been succinctly defined by the educationalist Micha Brumlik as simultaneously aesthetic, political and moral:

> Einerseits kann keine ästhetische Form dem Grauen genügen - andererseits kann nur künstlerische Gestaltung die mit dem Grauen und der Trauer einhergehenden Affekte auf Dauer im öffentlichen Raum darstellen. Einerseits kann der Verzicht auf ein Mahnmal als Unwille 'der Deutschen', sich der Schande der Nation zu erinnern, verstanden werden - andererseits läßt sich jedes vergleichsweise gelungene Mahnmal als abschließender Akt, der dem Vergessen Tür und Tor öffnet, deuten. Einerseits kann die Beschränkung auf die jüdischen Opfer als subtile Fortsetzung von Diskriminierung und Selektion denunziert werden - andererseits kann eine Ausweitung auf alle Opfergruppen als Verdrängung des antisemitischen Kerns der Shoah kritisiert werden.[66]

The ambiguities underlying the Vél' d'Hiv' and, in particular, the Holocaust Monument, provided the very substance of public debate which turned them into sites of memory. The date of the annual Vél' d'Hiv' commemoration and the urban site of the Holocaust Monument both embody poignantly the irresolvable contradictions innate to these monuments, as simultaneously "negative" and "positive" sites of memory with which conventional codes and national discourses were expressed and articulated anew. The Vél' d'Hiv' is commemorated on the first Sunday following 16 July each year, that is, two days after the national day of commemoration on 14 July, and thus juxtaposes the positive founding moment of 1789 with its symbolic negation of 1940-44. The Holocaust Monument symbolically sustains the memory of the genocide on the site of the former no-man's-land between East and West Berlin. Both monuments incorporate negative memories in proximity to each nation's positive repertoire of commemorations, 1789 in France and 1989 in Germany. In light of Reese-Schäfer's definition of "negative nationalism", the Berlin monument could be interpreted on the basis of its urban site as a symbolic convergence of the national

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[65] Fischer-Defoy, quoted in: Endlich, *Die Zukunft des Berliner 'Prinz-Albrecht-Geländes' ('Gestapo-Geländes')"*, Berlin: Senatsverwaltung für Kulturelle Angelegenheiten & Berliner Festspiele, 1990, p. 16. Walter Jens even compared the site and size of the Holocaust Monument with those of National Socialist architecture, referring to a "Reichsopferfeld": "Brüllen kann nicht überbrüllt, sondern nur flüsternd, ja, beinahe stimmlos auf den Begriff gebracht werden." See: Jens, "In letzter Minute", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 7.2.98, p. 33.

founding moment of crime with that of its historical consequence, division, as a focal point of self-understanding common to both eastern and western sectors of Germany. However, since unification in 1990, both the crime and its alleged "punishment" may be equally relegated to the realm of memory and commemorative representations. As a pure symbol of former crimes and division, this monument also effectively symbolises unity today, as the negation or *overcoming of division.*

E. Trans- and post-national sites of memory

As R. M. Lepsius has shown in the case of the former Federal and Democratic Republics of Germany and in Austria, events occurring during the National Socialist dictatorship have served as historical cornerstones of three different political cultures. Lepsius explores the way in which each country derived particular national legitimation from founding events which, had they *not* occurred, could have precluded the dictatorship: in the FRG the collapse of the Weimar Republic, in the GDR the failed revolution of 1918/19, and, in Austria, the break-up of political stability and the introduction of a corporate state in 1934.[67] Although there exist significant differences between France and the Federal Republic of Germany, both between the methods of administering commemorations of war crimes and between the controversial issues which they provoked, these countries have drawn political legitimation since 1989 by recognising and negating the common historical heritage of the Second World War on the basis of national commemorative rituals and monuments. The fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the end of hostilities staged in Europe in 1995, for example, fulfilled a common function in each country by putting a symbolic seal not only on the end of the war, but also on the end of the prolonged and intense series of fiftieth anniversary commemorations themselves. Most European capital cities contain an official site for national rituals of remembrance for victims of the world wars - the Cenotaph in London, the tomb of the unknown soldier in Paris, the Neue Wache in Berlin - yet only in Paris and Berlin have efforts been undertaken to inaugurate alternative national war memorials which do not mourn the nation's victims but victims of of the nation's perpetration. And whereas both countries played different roles in this event, the Second World War nevertheless represents a common historical and political caesura and a founding moment of their contemporary memory cultures. Commemorative rituals

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[66] Micha Brumlik, "Gewissen, Gedenken und anamnetische Solidarität", *Universitas* 630, December 1998, pp. 1143-1153, p. 1152-3.

[67] Lepsius, "Das Erbe des Nationalsozialismus und die politische Kultur der Nachfolgestaaten des 'Großdeutschen Reiches'", p. 230-231.

and discourses differed, but fulfilled similar political functions by appealing for political legitimacy and consensus in each country.

We may conclude that, in spite of the national confines of memory cultures, sustained largely by the restriction of the diffusion of historical information via national languages and national mass media, the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument conform to patterns of historical commemoration, discourse and interpretation which are *shared* by different nations. The focal event of the Second World War conforms to what we may define as a principle of commemorative *subsidiarity*. Although the type and theme of commemoration in each country were not selected according to scientific principle, but resulted from a sequence of coincidences ranging from the wording of petitions, the nature of the chosen urban site, the biographies of political leaders, the varying cohesion of political parties and selection procedures, they each offered opportunities to discuss memories of international historical events of the 1930s and 40s on a local level. The fact that specific national understandings of the legacy of the Second World War are transmitted with analogous transnational forms and patterns of commemoration reveals the inadequacy of a purely national apprehension of this event. According to the historian Michael Geyer, it may be apprehended only as a "contestatory mesh of narratives" in relation to "the disjointed nature of its national history".[68] Different nations share a common cultural and historical system of references derived from this event. The "subliminal solidarity"[69] between nations affected by the Second World War no longer conforms to a pattern established during the nineteenth century, when nations depended upon mutual enmity in order to fuel a sense of identity in *opposition* to their neighbours.[70] As historical "prisms" of contemporary memory cultures, neither the Vél' d'Hiv' nor the Holocaust Monument have been perceived as symbols of conflict with an enemy outside national territory, but as symbols of *reconciliation* with an imagined religious, ethnic or political victim within the nation. The traditional pattern of identifying nations in binary oppositions between an ingroup and an outgroup have thus been supplanted by a more complex process of identification in which the ingroup is no longer homogeneous and defined territorially, but subverted from within by the remembrance and recognition of crimes against a former victim or outgroup.

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[68] Michael Geyer, "The Place of the Second World War in German Memory and History", *New German Critique* 71, 1997, pp. 5-40, p. 39.

[69] "Unterschwellige Solidarität". Cf. Hagen Schulze & Etienne François, "Das emotionale Fundament der Nationen", in: Monika Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen. Ein europäisches Panorama,* p. 28.

[70] Transnational solidarity was expressed in the 1990s when French people protested at the non-invitation of Chancellor Kohl to attend the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Allied Normandy landings in 1994. Cf. Olivier Duhamel & Jérôme Jaffré (eds), *L'Etat de l'opinion 1995,* Paris: SOFRES, Seuil, 1995.

The ambiguous combination of "positive" and "negative" national discourses corroborates Nora's dialectic conception of archival memory (see Chapter I, Section C.2.c.). Nora claims that sites of memory sustain complementary forms of "sentimental" and "ethnographical" memory serving to either "construct" or "deconstruct" a sense of identity. On the one hand, both the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument served to fix a historical event in conventional ritual and sculptural forms as publicly visible points of historical reference in each capital city. On the other hand, the prolonged and complex public debates detracted from and therefore subverted the effect of rhetorical and sculptural forms in which events were commemorated as focal points of emotional identification. The debates offered a focal point of national memory but also a platform for a complex exchange of memories, a "mesh of narratives". These monuments may be categorised as sites of memory, whereas their resultant debates are sites of *memories* in conflict, operating at an "intersubjective" level.[71] The Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument do not conform to Nora's normative notion of memory as "patrimonial memory" *(mémoire patrimoine),* which neutralises the political divisiveness of historical memories; according to Nora, "patrimonial memory" celebrates the past as "pastness", that is, the past for its own sake, without regard for historical details, and thereby diffuses conflict in a process which Nora refers to as the "exhaustion of conflicts" *(épuisement des oppositions).*[72] Instead, as sources of reflection *on* the very function of national commemorations, expressed particularly during discussion over the Holocaust Monument, these debates are an expression of what Jürgen Habermas defines as "post-traditional identity",[73] in which the past does not offer a model for behaviour in the present but a source of critical discussion on questions of political self-understanding.

3. Dialogic Monuments

The purpose of this study has been to explain the function of two monuments commemorating deportation and genocide as focal points of contemporary national memory cultures in France and Germany. It has not covered exhaustively the numerous existent theories on nations and nationhood, but has drawn on concepts where they served to illustrate political meanings projected onto monuments during their production and reception. Anthony Smith, for

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[71] Jean- Marc Ferry, *L'Ethique reconstructive,* p. 44.

[72] Pierre Nora, "La nation-mémoire", in *Les Lieux de mémoire,* II. *La Nation* 3, pp. 647-658, p. 650.

[73] Jürgen Habermas, *Die nachholende Revolution,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990, p. 220; *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987, p. 173.

example, emphasises the importance of shared memories in the construction of national self-understanding, albeit without giving precision to this category. Karl Deutsch and Murray Edelman identify methods used to construct identities in social communication, and Pierre Nora traces the historical evolution of symbolic representations in France, developing an extensive analysis of the role of representations as public "archives" of national memory.

Since no single theory may adequately explain the role played by commemorative forms and public discourses in the construction and articulation of memory cultures in either France or Germany, the final chapter identifies both particularities and common patterns inferable on the basis of rhetorical and sculptural source material in empirical case studies. Both debates were carried out essentially by intellectuals and politicians in the mass media. They were therefore highly political in nature, yet governed by preexistent notions of nationhood, generations and compensation, via which various codes such as centrality, origins, difference, naturalness, in- and outgroups or cultural emblems were adapted and manipulated or redefined.

There likewise exists no all-encompassing notion which captures either the style or function of contemporary monuments. Several existent terms, such as counter-, ephemeral, objectless or undesirable monuments, do pinpoint essential features of monumental art, but remain partial. The historian Jay Winter offers a more comprehensive definition of war memorials of the First World War as sacred "cultural codes" aiding the process of mourning victims of war.[74] However, Winter admits that such "traditional languages of commemoration"[75] failed to be adapted after the Second World War. Jochen Spielmann characterises the period since 1989 in the FRG as one in which monuments were treated as focal points for debates over the interpretation of National Socialism on the one hand, and as instruments for making known and implementing the political intentions of minorities on the other.[76] Aleida and Jan Assmann define a threefold "personal", "social" and "political" function of monuments.[77] All these definitions certainly spotlight but do not explain the precise mechanisms by which the interrelation between monuments and their political context is articulated in the public sphere – a process which leads mere stone artefacts to impinge upon historical consciousness by acquiring the status of 'national' memorials.

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[74] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 5ff & 225.

[75] Idem., p. 9.

[76] Jochen Spielmann, "Steine des Anstoßes - Denkmale in Erinnerung an den Nationalsozialismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland", *Kritische Berichte* 3, 1988, pp. 5-16, p. 13.

[77] Interview with Aleida & Jan Assmann, "Niemand lebt im Augenblick", *Die Zeit,* 3.12.98, pp. 43-44, p.44.

In conclusion, I will propose three analytical parameters for understanding the complex artistic and political significance of monuments, in accordance with the three closely related interpretative approaches outlined in Chapter I: *form* (sculptural, rhetorical or ritual), *context* (production and reception), and *intention* (the interests of political agents and observers). On the basis of the cases studies in Chapter II, I will argue that forms of contemporary monuments are multiple and *open,* that their social context renders them impracticable or *inexpedient* as media of political intentions which may only be interpreted, finally, in light of political *procedures* governing debates over monuments.

Although Nora's concepts of "memorial patrimony", "generational" consciousness, "archival" memory and "memory-nation" provide an indispensable conceptual foundation for assessing the political function of symbols in France and elsewhere, none of the contributions to the seven-volume collection *Les Lieux de mémoire* accords significance to the specifically *formal* discursive elaboration of either ritual means of commemoration (in speeches or monuments) or the public debate about these means. This close reading of discursive forms in relation to their political and historical functions, instead of a purely historical account of their genesis, is intended as a bridge between formal and contextual analysis of monuments as sites of memory. The question whether monuments in the 1990s can legitimately be called "national", and therefore whether nations are *"denkmalfähig",*[78] that is, capable of possessing monuments which fulfil a national representational function, appears to have been answered affirmatively by the prolonged but successful campaigns for the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument. However, the disparate forms of these monuments demonstrates that the mechanisms by which they were realised cannot be explained on the basis of either their formal attributes or their political appropriation alone, but as a discursive process deriving from the encounter between art and politics, one which is open, contingent on political procedures, and in which monuments are poor or inexpedient supports of the expression of political interests.

A. Open forms. Monumental disputes as a genre

Given the multiplicity of forms and functions of war memorials since the Second World War, is it possible to define coherently the functions of the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument in

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[78] Cf. Wolfgang Eberl, "Sind Denkmäler heute möglich?", in: Ekkehard Mai & Gisela Schmirber (eds), *Denkmal - Zeichen - Monument. Skulptur und öffentlicher Raum heute,* Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1989,
pp. 35-37, p. 36.

relation to existing memorials? Since the nineteenth century, figurative monuments made of stone have been a standard feature of public places in European cities. In France and Germany, for example, monuments to cultural and historical figures, to events such as the French Revolution, but also to the Napoleonic wars, the Franco-Prussian War and the two world wars, have been systematically erected, restored, neglected, removed or replaced according to their political expediency. As foci of public and political attention, they testify to the tradition of the use of tangible symbols set in urban and rural landscapes by associations or nation-states in order to sustain memory cultures. Today, a large number of these monuments still adorn city landscapes. The Arc de Triomphe in Paris, Nelson's Column in London or the Völkerschlachtdenkmal in Leipzig are three obvious examples relating to the Napoleonic wars. Monuments to the two world wars of the twentieth century differ from those of the nineteenth century. These are generally smaller in size and, after 1918, took the form of figurative sculptures, or tombs containing the remains of unknown soldiers, mass cemeteries and cenotaphs, while monuments erected after 1945 often included plaques, inscriptions added to memorials for victims of the First World War, or monuments and museums on historically significant sites.

Following the First World War, war memorials were no longer designed to celebrate heroic victims in triumphal arches or victory columns characteristic of the Napoleonic Wars or the Franco-Prussian War, but to mourn the dead who were often perceived as national martyrs. However, the cult of victims was sustained on a transcendental religious level: "These two motifs - war as *both* noble and uplifting and tragic *and* unendurably sad - are present in virtually all postwar war memorials."[79] By contrast, states were reluctant to inaugurate monuments immediately after 1945.[80] The events of 1933-45 posed a greater challenge to the practice of commemoration than those of 1914-1918. While the first central memorials appeared in France and the German Democratic Republic in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Federal Republic began discussions for such a monument in Bonn only in the mid-1980s, and finally inaugurated one after unification in 1993 (Neue Wache) and 1999 (Holocaust Monument). Since the 1960s, forms of monuments were invented that not only explored new types of expression but challenged the very tradition of marking historical events with monuments in order to commemorate the past in the present. Crucial to this development were the works of the American and German artists Edward Kienholz and

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[79] Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, p. 85.

[80] Cf. Axel Lapp, "Monumentales Schweigen - keine Kriegerdenkmäler in Westeuropa nach dem II. Weltkrieg", paper presented at conference "Denkmale und kulturelles Gedächtnis nach dem Ende der Ost-West-Konfrontation" in the Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 18-22 November 1998.

Jochen Gerz. Kienholz's "anti-monument",[81] the *Portable War Memorial* of 1968, comprises a blackboard and chalk with which spectators are invited to record the names of victims of future wars, while Gerz's much debated "counter-monument"[82] of the 1980s and 1990s is based on the principle that invisible monuments draw spectators into an active questioning of their relation to the past and its representations. The inscription on the plaque marking the site of Gerz's invisible "Monument Against Fascism" in Harburg near Hamburg reads "Denn nichts kann auf Dauer auf unserer Stelle sich gegen das Unrecht erheben". This desire to renounce representation altogether not only recalls the ban on divine images in Jewish theology, but testifies to what Hubertus Tim Adam calls the "capitulation" of artistic representation and its incapacity to function as a "social corrective".[83] The critic James Young favours an equally radical renunciation of representation by calling for the *suspension* of monuments in order to sustain discussion over the very means of commemorating. Commenting the project to build a permanent memorial "Topographie des Terrors" on the former site of the Gestapo headquarters in Berlin, Young suggests that "left unresolved, the memorial project at the Gestapo-Gelände flourishes precisely because it contests memory - because it continues to challenge, exasperate, edify, and invite visitors into a dialogue between themselves and their past".[84]

New monuments inaugurated during the 1980s and 1990s do not conform to a single dominant style, but are formally eclectic. The lack of consensus over the type of commemorations or monuments has triggered a large number of public debates over sculptural forms, the wording of commemorative speeches, the process of selecting a monument, the use of historical evidence in monuments, and over historical interpretation in relation to the self-understanding of historical communities. The Vél' d'Hiv', Neue Wache and Holocaust Monument, but also the statue of "bomber Harris", unveiled in 1992 in memory of the commander of the air raids on Dresden in 1944, or even monuments erected in the Eastern bloc between 1945 and 1989 - all these monuments have been the object of debates over state representations of national memory. They therefore testify to the significance still imputed to monuments as a *genre*, and to the continued attempts to voluntarily cultivate collective self-understanding on the basis of shared memories and values associated directly with symbolic historical places. Monuments are still expected to fulfil a

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[81] Reinhard Koselleck, "Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftungen der Überlebenden", in Odo Marquard (ed.), *Identität,* Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1979, pp. 255-276, p. 274.

[82] Cf. James Young, "The Counter-monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today", in *Critical Inquiry* 2, 1992, pp. 267-296, p. 274.

[83] Hubertus Tim Adam, "Kämpfe um die Erinnerung. Die Neue Wache im diskursiven Streit", in Thomas Schmidt et al (eds), *Nationaler Totenkult. Die Neue Wache. Eine Streitschrift zur zentralen deutschen Gedenkstätte,* Berlin: Karin Kramer Verlag, 1995, pp. 43-65, p. 60f.

pedagogical function in the transmission and maintenance of historical memories. As fewer and fewer witnesses remain alive in the 1990s, forms of historical media, including film, literature, monuments and television or CD Roms, play an increasingly central role in the transmission of knowledge of the Second World War.[85] Monumental forms of commemoration, as witnessed in the debates over the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument, have therefore been given a high priority by political authorities, and engage intense public interest. However, states can no longer rely on what Mona Ozouf calls the "docility" of citizens towards the pedagogical goals of public symbols. It is therefore questionable whether monuments continue to appeal to a sense of national belonging with regard to generations that did not participate in or witness these events. Although they continue to serve as a backdrop for state rituals and commemorations, or even as topographical landmarks - decorative complements to otherwise empty squares or crossroads - their political function today is obscure.

In spite of aesthetic innovations since the 1960s, conventional sculptural monuments continue to be erected and therefore demand interpretation. The very coherence and continuity of issues debated in relation to the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument testify to a fundamental consensus not over form, but over procedure and underlying prerequisites for the monuments: that they should, for example mark a central site in the capital city, be permanent, commemorate victims of crimes, and amend shortcomings of existing monuments. Their interpretation was rendered more complex, however, by the fact that there exists no collectively accepted *style* or thematic *content*, such that we cannot identify the present epoch with a particular type of monument. This lack of consensus on monumental types exacerbated confusion over the form of the Holocaust Monument, and possibly explains the lack of debate, if not disinterest, regarding the sculptural form of the Vél' d'Hiv' monument. In the case of the Holocaust Monument, neither standard monumental forms handed down from previous epochs, such as the obelisk, archway, plinth and figure, nor contemporary counter-, experiential, semiotic forms or the cenotaph motif won unanimous approval, in spite of elaborate measures employed to forge their social acceptance, such as exhibitions, forums, press reports and conferences. However, the lack of consensus, coupled with verbal insistence on consensus and reconciliation was, paradoxically, the most constant feature of both debates, such that we may even define disputed monuments as a genre in its own right. The dialogue provoked by these monuments is perhaps their defining feature, one

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[84] Young, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorials and Meaning,* New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993, p. 90.

[85] Cf. Annette Wieviorka, *L'Ere du témoin,* Paris: Plon, 1998.

which facilitates the open exchange of plural interpretations of history and of the function of historical memories in relation to their representations and forms of transmission.

B. Inexpedient intentions. The inaptness of monuments as media for the implementation of political objectives

Although the petitions of citizens' action groups in both France and Germany did not predetermine precisely the wording of the speech or sculptural form of the monument, they imposed conditions on the types of medium to be used and their significance: a presidential speech and a monument, which were required to symbolise a collective national attitude. These conditions determined the terms of debate on the false assumption that monuments should *stand for*[86] national memory. Monuments are inefficient or inexpedient conveyors of political messages, however. The intentions of organisers are inevitably subject to the mediation of artists, and to artistic or rhetorical forms which are in turn contingent upon multiple receptions and reinterpretations. The complexity of discursive networks and procedures with which the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument were implemented also rendered these monuments contingent upon often arbitrary influences, that is, ones subject to chance or the interests of associations, politicians or parties which were projected onto but not inherent to the significance of the sites. In France, debate focused on the behaviour of the presidents (in particular Mitterrand's biography), excluded discussion on the form of the monument, and engaged journalists, historians and politicians. In Germany, debate focused initially on monumental form as a definitive gesture of national reconciliation and engaged journalists, historians, politicians and artists, but also became embroiled in dispute between the three organising and sponsoring bodies, the Berlin Senate, Federal Government and the association Perspektive Berlin,[87] as well as non-Jewish victim associations such that the multiplication of decision-making authorities resulted in a multiplication of grounds for dispute.

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[86] On the function of symbols as "alibi" "standing for" *(stellvertretend)* something else, or to which we "delegate" the responsibility of remembering, see: Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community,* Chichester, London & New York: : Ellis Horwood & Tavistock Publications, 1985, p. 18; Stefanie Endlich, "Gedenkstätten und Gedenkorte in Berlin", in S. Endlich & Thomas Lutz (eds), *Gedenken und Lernen an historischen Orten. Ein Weg weiser zu Gedenkstätten für die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus in Berlin,* Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1995, p. 14; Willi Goetschel, "Ab/Deckerinnerung im großen Stil", in: Neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (ed.), *Der Wettbewerb für das 'Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas'",* Berlin: Verlag der Kunst, 1995, pp. 52-56, p.56; Salomon Korn, "Holocaust-Gedenken: Ein deutsches Dilemma", *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 4, 17 January 1997, pp. 23-30, P. 23; David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History,* London: Viking, 1996, p. 12; Christian Meier, "Das Problem eines Berliner Denkmals", *Die neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte* 8, 1997, pp. 733-743, p. 733; Pierre Nora, "Entre mémoire et histoire", in Nora (ed.), *Les Lieux de mémoire,* I. La République, pp. xvii-xlii, p. xxvi; Harry Redner, *A New Science of Representation,* Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford: Westview Press, 1994, p. 25f.; Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit* Vol. 3, Paris: Seuil, p. 253f; Ruth Wodack et al., *Die Sprachen der Vergangenheiten. Öffentliches Gedenken in österreichischen und deutschen Medien,* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994, p. 105.

[87] Later called "Förderkreis zur Errichtung eines Denkmals für die ermordeten Juden Europas".

Moreover, dissent within political parties hindered administrative measures undertaken to forge a cohesive public opinion. In France, dispute over Mitterrand's refusal to hold a speech split the PS. Following President Chirac's recognition of deportations in his Vél' d'Hiv' speech of July 1995, Philippe Séguin's attempt to diffuse the defamatory campaign of the Front National, designed to lure voters from the right of the RPR by dissociating the Gaullist party RPR from President Chirac, likewise split the RPR. In Germany, the discordant positions of the SPD and CDU parties at national and local levels thwarted the authority of members of parliament, parties and ministers to promote public consensus on the monument issue. For this reason, although the campaigns for both monuments were highly politicised, they sapped the capacity of governmental apparatus to implement decision-making processes. The political significance of these monuments may be reduced neither to party nor individual interests. They may therefore be better understood on the basis of the codes and types of discourse invested in their interpretation by participants in the debates, as outlined above. The public encodement and discursive rendering, rather than party-political resolutions, determined the genuine political significance of these campaigns.

The relation between art and politics exemplified in disputes over the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument may not be defined as one of "instrumentalisation". This term would suggest that political intentions are developed then sequentially "encoded" and communicated via a commemorative medium, which may subsequently be "decoded" by spectators. In practice, people do not "identify" directly with a monument, whose significance is contingent upon meanings acquired by its interactions with secondary media of speeches, rituals, reports, forums, conferences, exhibitions and political statements. Moreover, the inconclusive and often contradictory standpoints of participants in debates over these monuments testified to the resistance of monuments to political instrumentalisation. Whereas Grass, Jens and Konrad doubted the efficacy of the monument as a support for historical memories,[88] for example, Bubis and Walser interpreted it as a mimetic *reflection* of national memory and thus adopted the restrictive conditions of the petition, which had supposed a proportional relation between monuments and national self-understanding. Attempts to "instrumentalise" politically these monuments were founded on the erroneous assumption that there exists a direct relation between monumental representation and the moral state of the nation as an organic whole. The political expediency of monuments appears even less credible if we attempt to systematise the connection between political and aesthetic interests of participants in the debate, because the stated political position of individuals gives no indication of

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[88] Cf. Open letter, "'Aus Einsicht verzichten'", *Der Tagesspiegel*, 4.2.98, p. 25.

their attitude towards the monuments: Mitterrand, Séguin, Walser, extreme right-wing parties and left-wing associations in both countries opposed the projects, whereas Chirac, Bubis and members of the German SPD including Willy Brandt approved them. However, both these groups, of opponents and supporters of the commemorations, shared the common assumption that the gesture of representation "stands for" the nation's collective remembrance of war crimes. In reality, however, the issues and interests at stake - the representation of national memory and the memory of victims - are complex and surpass the capacity of any one object, museum or commemoration to embody or represent them. The impulse to commemorate therefore appears to emerge from a *confusion of aesthetic and political categories,* based on the false assumption that the authority of symbolic representation is a substitute for the authority of political representation.[89]

The binary categorisation of approaches to these monuments, in which participants were either "for" or "against", characterised the explicitly political element of debates in both France and Germany. Such either-or argumentation was politically expedient, but often surpassed the genuine function of the monuments. Both Mitterrand and Chirac were in favour of the commemoration and monument for ideological reasons in support of republican tradition, and differed exclusively over the interpretation of the verbal gesture demanded by the Vél' d'Hiv' Comité 42. An analogous pattern occurred in Germany, where political standpoints towards the Holocaust Monument were developed particularly during the parliamentary election campaign of 1998, and voluntarily forged prior to the Bundestag vote of June 1999. Political standpoints expressed in terms of supporters and opponents were dictated by political interests, but were nevertheless neither coherent nor offered insight into the contingent significance of representations. Robert Musil's enlightening essay of 1927, which identifies the indifference and blindness of passers-by to monuments, suggests that the reception of monuments is indeterminate.[90] We may therefore define the politically motivated standpoints taken towards the Vél' d'Hiv' and Holocaust Monument in the following terms: as "realist" when supporting monuments in order to guarantee future memory, or when opposing them in order to guarantee oblivion, where monuments are understood as embodiments of national memory; as "dialogic" when supporting or opposing them as an aid to remembering on condition that their form, size, situation, as well as the conditions and political context of projects and their

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[89] For a detailed analysis of the interrelation between political and aesthetic representation, see Frank Ankersmit, *Aesthetic Politics. Political Philosophy Beyond Fact and Value,* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, Chapter I; Harry Redner makes distinctions between aesthetic, bureaucratic, economic, legal and political representation: see Redner, *A New Science of Representation,* p. 37, 46.

[90] Cf. Robert Musil, "Denkmale", *Gesammelte Werke* II, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978, pp. 506-509.

relation to existing commemorations and urban sites are previously assessed and accounted for when realising them.

Participants in the debates with explicit political interests adopted unambiguous standpoints, either for or against the monuments. By adhering to the coercive conditions of petitions, claiming that the representations would cure the "sick" French nation or fulfil the "duty of all Germans", these realist standpoints, whether for or against the projects, showed strong commitment to cultural politics. By taking political "art" seriously, politicians inadvertently promoted the phenomenon described by Nora as the "archivisation of memory", according to which artefacts operate as carriers of historical traditions and political identities. However, the conditions of petitions and the direct involvement of members of parliament, chancellors and presidents in the selection of these symbols, created an imbalance between the signification of the sites in themselves and their anticipated political significance as national monuments. This reliance on cultural representations in order to sustain memory and enforce historical interpretations, often for party political purposes, as for example during the presidential election in France in 1995 and the parliamentary election in Germany in 1998, testifies to the politicisation of symbolic or "prepolitical" methods of representation.[91]

C. Procedural context. The displacement of the function of monuments from representation to participation

The terms of petitions of the associations Comité Vél' d'Hiv' 42 and Perspektive Berlin each stipulated conditions which, if fulfilled, were to be valid for an entire nation. Arguments aired in the ensuing debates adopted the criteria of petitions, such that the quest to establish consensus in each case was determined by the relation between the *conditions* and *means* available to fulfil them - between their national representativeness and the rhetorical or sculptural forms of commemoration. In these cases, the capacity of monuments to fulfil national representative functions (in German: their *Denkmalfähigkeit*) is thus determined by the relation between conditions and available means. These conditions were fulfilled more effectively in the case of the

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[91] The term "prepolitical" stems from Herfried Münkler, *Politische Bilder, Politik der Metaphern,* Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1994, p. 25. See also Marc Guillaume's definition of "un rapport de familiarité, d'indifférence affectueuse", in *La Politique du patrimoine*, Editions Galilée, 1980, p. 192; and Dominique Poulot's discussion of "un progressif refroidissement du politique": Poulot, "De l'héritage monumental à l'entreprise de patrimoine. Pour une histoire de la transmission culturelle en France, XVIII-XXe", *EUI Working Paper* 91/3, Bada Fiesolana: European University Institute, 1991, p. 18.

Vél' d'Hiv' than the Holocaust Monument for three reasons: in his speech, President Chirac counterbalanced the memory of deportations with positive traditions of the Enlightenment and Gaullist values; the "authentic" historical site of the Vél' d'Hiv' provided a concise narrative and historical justification of the commemoration; and decision-making procedures (over the wording of the speech or the form of the monument) were largely excluded from public discussion until after the event. By contrast, the memory of the genocide against Jews was not readily counterbalanced by a single alternative positive tradition in Germany, where no nationwide consensus had previously been established over the exclusive authority of one national founding moment, whether over the 1848 or 1918 revolutions, for example, over the Weimar Republic, or over the East German workers' uprising on 17 June 1953; moreover, the claim that the Holocaust Monument should commemorate the genocide *in general* overestimated the semantic capacity of a single site and sculptural artefact; and the decision-making procedure here was rendered highly complex by the plebiscitary nature of the debate, offering regular opportunities for public involvement in exhibitions and conferences and extensive press coverage, statements by political leaders, the involvement of three organising bodies and an advisory jury. In spite of similar conditions, dissimilar procedures used to implement each commemoration (regarding alternative positive points of historical reference, the narrative concision of the history of the site, and political procedure), ensured that the debate in Germany lasted longer than that in France.

The facility with which governments and societies have erected what are commonly called "national" monuments has diminished since the Second World War. Monuments relating to this event rarely pay homage, as in the nineteenth century, or serve as aids for private mourning, as following the First World War. And although the post-war period has been marked by a decrease in figurative and an increase in abstract forms of monuments, the obstacle to erecting monuments to war crimes, as illustrated in particular by the Holocaust Monument, lay not in the advent of abstraction, but in their disturbing historical referent.[92] Dispute was provoked partially by the challenge to select an appropriate form, but essentially by the question whether the monumental genre in itself was an adequate means of commemoration. These "negative" monuments defied the erection of a figurative object with which the nation could identify in a traditional, affirmative manner. In this sense, even figures of universal suffering such as the pietà in the Neue Wache were too specific. None of the short-listed projects in Berlin had recourse to pure *representation* of a

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[92] Abstraction has an ambiguous political function. On the one hand, it appeals to the greatest number of people who may interpret an abstract sign in a way which corresponds to their own interests. On the other hand, abstract signs are less emotionally binding than figurative images of national heroes, for example. A quantitative increase in consensus therefore entails the penalty of a qualitative decrease in the value of consensus.

cultural figure or event, but demanded instead the active *participation* of spectators. Even the figurative, three-dimensional Vél' d'Hiv' monument, appealing to the direct identification of spectators with victims of the nation, was interpreted in speeches and debates in relation to alternative positive traditions. Both monuments testify to a displacement of their representational, "aesthetic" function to a participatory function. The network of semiotic references in Libeskind's proposal for the Holocaust Monument offered a closed set of references to historical events and existing symbols which spectators were invited to decode. The counter-monument by Jochen Gerz dispensed with artistic elements in order to induce spectators to question and write about their relation to historical media and the means by which historical understanding is acquired. Weinmiller's broken star of David was intended to foster meditation in a "stone garden". The experiential monument proposed by Eisenman is designed to arouse experiences of anxiety in spectators which give them a subjective sense of reliving the past which cancels out the function of the monument as a representation of history.

In this study of the function of monuments in contemporary memory cultures, I have examined monuments which are conventional insofar as they mark urban sites with stone, but whose significance is not determined by figurative form alone, and which do not embody narrative renderings of politically motivated messages about history. They are products of conflicting opinions and interests acquired via complex and multiple forms of media, whether sculptural or rhetorical. The process by which these monuments became central, national monuments was contingent upon conditions stipulated in the petitions of citizens' action groups, artistic and architectural competitions, structures of cultural administration, the intervention of state leaders, and the participation of journalists and members of public. No general law can be established to determine why a particular form or style of monument was produced in either of the given situations. In both cases, the task of designing a form was delegated to artists. Debate over the Holocaust Monument focused initially on the quest to select a sculptural form, but increasingly on issues of political expediency as well. Debate over the Vél' d'Hiv' focused on the presidential speech and political protocol, but not on sculptural form. Yet both monuments were pretexts for discussion by intellectuals, politicians and government leaders on the political and pedagogical function of commemorations and monuments in relation to their site, on the purpose or necessity of building them, and on the question of how to reach a common decision. They were often mistakenly understood and interpreted as representations standing directly for national self-understanding, based on a convention of mimesis prescribed by conditions of the petitions. In

reality, however, they fulfilled a catalytic function for public negotiation of the complex *medium* with which history is transferred and appropriated in the public sphere.

One could argue, using terms proposed by Pierre Nora, that the "ethnographical" function of these sites of memory outweighs their "sentimental" function as supports of individuals' attachment to shared "national" memories. As representations of history, they should nevertheless not be deplored as supports of "participation without participation"[93] in history or of "virtual"[94] historical experience. Instead, they offer a rich opportunity to participate in an ongoing critical procedure of negotiation of the modes for transmitting historical information. On one level, they invite individuals to participate in the monuments - in the "experiential" event presented by Eisenman, in the decoding of symbols constructed by Libeskind, or in the collection of written statements in Gerz's counter-monument, for example. On another level, they provoke controversy which invites us to participate in discussion over forms and the essential purpose of commemoration as such. They are not merely normative supports of an "imagined community" which, according to Benedict Anderson, presupposes a collective but vague sense of sharing a common language, history or cultural bonds within a limited and sovereign nation,[95] but rather their opposite: obstacles to a cohesive collective identity which stimulate open dialogue about the transmission and contemporary meaning of a difficult heritage. The quest for reconciliation or consensus over the issues of these monuments did not culminate in the common agreement of the greatest number of individuals on the specific wording of a commemorative speech or sculptural form, nor in the placatory appeal of abstraction - whether formal, in proposals for the Holocaust Monument, or rhetorical, in Chirac's appeal to the ideal of a transcendental national community - but in the common act of participating in the ongoing negotiation, construction and interpretation of historical media.

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[93] Nora, "Le Retour de l'événement", in Jacques Le Goff & Pierre Nora (eds), *Faire de l'histoire* Vol. I, Paris: Gallimard, 1974, pp. 210-228, p. 215.

[94] Nora, "Comment écrire l'histoire de France?", in *Les Lieux de mémoire,* III. *Les France* 1, pp. 11-32, p. 23; "L'Ere de la commémoration", in *Les Lieux de mémoire*, III. *Les France* 3, pp. 977-1012, p. 1011.

[95] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983), London: Verso, 1991, p. 7.