

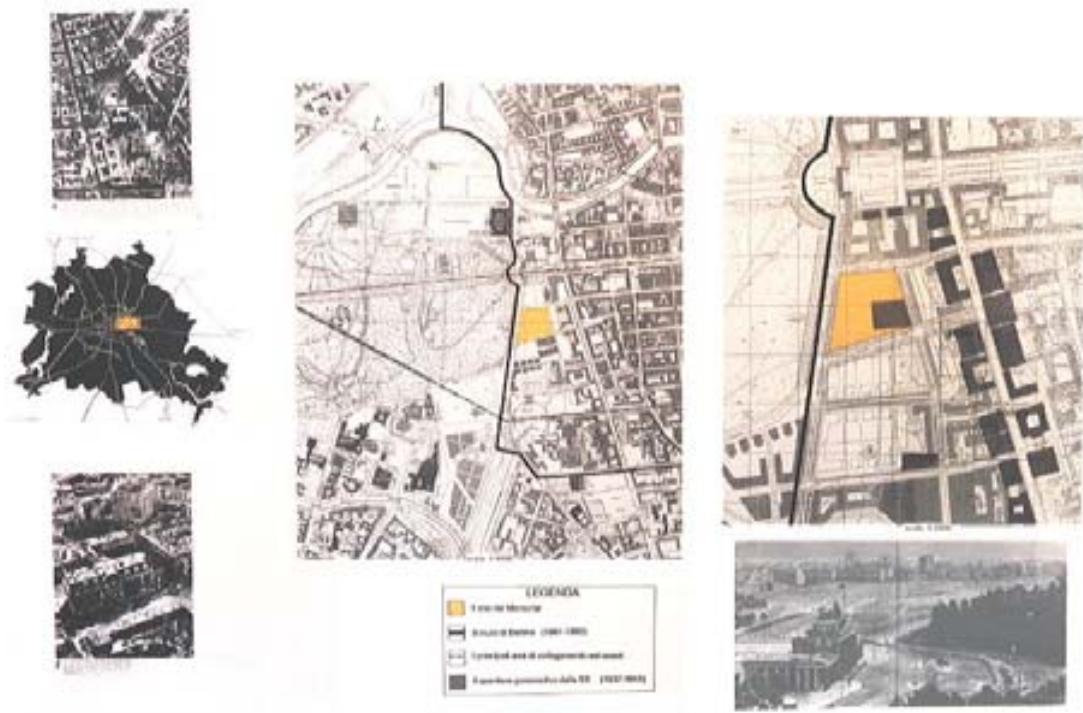
POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO  
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**Memorial to the murdered jews of Europe**

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The Memorial is a topic that has managed to arouse heated and conflicting emotions in whoever took it up. In my opinion, it merits our close attention. My proposed project aims to take the form of a pathway down the written memory of Berlin, a Berlin that finally takes up its historical consciousness and becomes fully aware of the war. I was forced to think of death in order to be able to project life. This dynamic project has come out of the antithesis between these two opposites. There is a movement that characterizes this project on the levels of the physical pathway as well as the level of the spiritual journey. Hence people move in order to be able to feel, even imaginatively, the labor, hope, fatigue, and the limitations of those sad days. I tried to solve the problems connected with the location of the site by creating a third square located between the two fundamental centers Pariser Platz and Leipziger Platz.

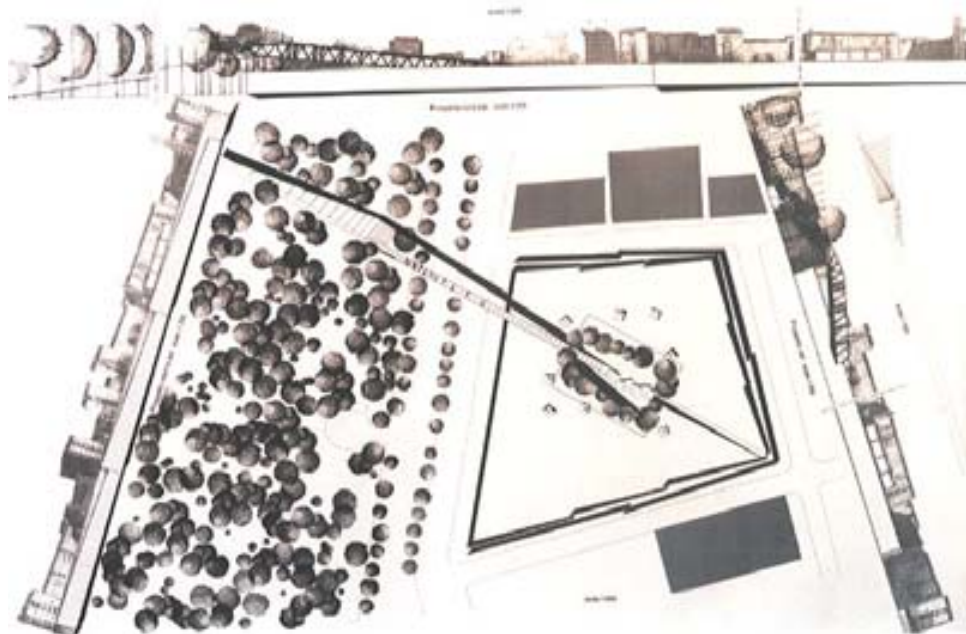


Hence I created that third gateway that always seemed to be missing in the stretch of street under consideration. This is a gateway that takes on a fundamental importance

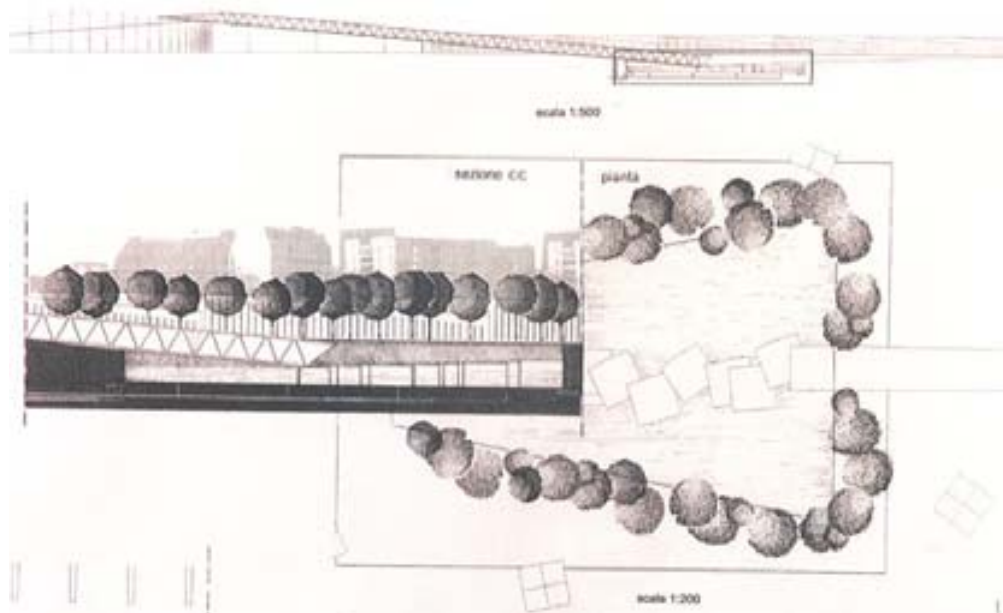
if we reflect that it allows us to connect those two parts - east and west - of a city that has been wounded by a laceration that has gone on for thirty years.

The key elements that I have taken into consideration are the train, the camp, death, the lives of the survivors, and the eternal memory as a warning that this should not be repeated. When people enter, they can walk down a narrow street closed in between cement walls that are spangled with a series of fractures. These symbolize openings in railroad cars. The deportees had tried to peer through cracks like these in order to see where they were being taken or in order to catch the consoling eye of family members.

The walls have many cuts in them and they get smaller as people keep on walking. This gives the walls a certain dynamism that grows as people enter the site. It becomes clear that this movement is a "going off the track of the wall-train" that in the original project went down the road linking the two successive corners of the project. This road runs towards a false destination in the history of the war.



People may walk a long time trying to see what is happening on the other side. They may experience a greater and greater lack of power over their senses as they go on. People may no longer be able to distinguish between what they really see and what they only imagine. They may lapse into a kind of confusion and disorientation. We may go down a ramp that takes us to the camp, which is represented in the project by a lake where water plays a basic role. Water is a stopping place: it is still. Water is also a starting off point because it is uniquely able to purify both the dead and the living.



A great pool of smooth white cement answers the need to represent the antithesis between life and death because it welcomes the visitors with extraordinary clarity. Its geometry is the symbol of sacrifice. In fact, the trapezoid is an inferior shape because it is generated from the circle. When this perfect form of the circle intersects the square, it degenerates into a trapezoid. I placed so many trees around the lake to remind us that all the concentration camps were hidden in thick woods. Names like *Buchenwald* ("beech-woods") or *Birkenau* ("birch-woods") testify to this. At this point people can begin to climb up. The ascent is symbolic but at the same time physical. A ramp covered with great cuts of light points out the way we should think about the lives of the survivors. The ramp is dotted with those lights and inevitable shadows that people had had to live with in the camps. In the end we see light -- a lot of it. We can finally go out, link up again with the city, and go down to Berlin. (We are in the Tiergarten.)

A row of poles that get higher and higher serves as the support for the passage way. This is what allows us to enter the park. It indicates the continuity of life in death as well as the importance of memory over time. In fact, the line that these poles create continues the line plotted by the ramp, which represents the lives of the survivors. When I projected the Memorial, I had also tried to create an atmosphere where the perception of historical reality melted in with an external harmony in which it would be possible to perceive, almost physically, a kind of peace. Here physical and mental barriers would be knocked down and children, along with adults, would be able to absorb a joyous and positive atmosphere.

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