

# Jewish Tourism in Berlin and Germany's Public Repentance for the Holocaust

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For generations, members of the Jewish diaspora boycotted German products and would not have dreamed of stepping foot within the borders of a nation that murdered six million of their people. Today, however, American Jews are no less likely to visit Germany than non-Jewish Americans are, and thousands of Israeli Jews live in Berlin. My research asks how the German government and private tourism industries approach Jewish tourism in Berlin and assesses how Jewish visitors respond to the experience of visiting Berlin. During the summer of 2018, I interviewed four tour guides and numerous tourists, observed people's interaction with the city's Holocaust memorials and other Jewish sites, partook in Jewish-themed tours, and conducted a 'netnography' of analysing over ten thousand TripAdvisor reviews. This qualitative research showed that while many Jews express apprehension about visiting Germany and experience emotional turmoil on site, the abundant memorials and museums dedicated to the Holocaust convince most Jewish tourists that the nation is dedicated to educating and reminding its people about Germany's past crimes and committed to repairing their relationship with the global Jewish community. The trips have the effect of both strengthening tourists' Jewish identity and allowing them to reconcile their people's traumatic history with the current German nation. The article provides a brief analysis of Germany's post-war marketing directed at foreign Jews, describes the Jewish-related sites in Berlin, and reveals the responses of Jewish tourists in Berlin before presenting its conclusions.

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## **Introduction**

For generations, members of the Jewish diaspora boycotted German products and would not have dreamed of stepping foot within the borders of a nation that murdered six million of their people. Today, however, American Jews are no less likely to visit Germany than non-Jewish Americans are, and thousands of Israeli Jews live in Berlin (Podoshen, 2006). As the generation of Holocaust survivors has died, an increas-

ing number of Jews enter Germany on business trips, Holocaust pilgrimages, or as tourists, and have faced the trial of reconciling their relationship with a reunified German nation. The German government has made great efforts to attract foreign Jewish tourists, and tour purveyors market unique opportunities for that population.

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Berlin and assesses how Jewish visitors respond to the experience of visiting Berlin. During the summer of 2018, I interviewed four tour guides and numerous tourists, observed people's interaction with the city's Holocaust memorials and other Jewish sites, partook in Jewish-themed tours, and conducted a 'netnography' of analysing thousands of TripAdvisor reviews. I limited the study to Berlin, as it was considered the heart of the Nazi beast and would be more likely to force visitors to confront the nation's past. This qualitative research showed that while many Jews express apprehension about visiting Germany and experience emotional struggles on site, the abundant memorials and museums dedicated to the Holocaust convince most Jewish tourists that the nation is dedicated to educating and reminding its people about Germany's past crimes and committed to repairing their relationship with the global Jewish community. The trips have the effect of both strengthening tourists' Jewish identity and allowing them to reconcile their people's traumatic history with the current German nation. This article provides a brief analysis of Germany's post-war marketing directed at foreign Jews, describes the Jewish-related sites in Berlin, and reveals the responses of Jewish tourists in Berlin before presenting its conclusions.

For many Jews, visiting Germany was simply out of the question until about a generation ago. In *My Germany: A Jewish Writer Returns to the World his Parents Escaped*, Lev Raphael (2009, p. 53) recalled that 'the idea of ever going to Germany was too overwhelming and frightening to contemplate for long' Taught that Germany's success was built off wealth plundered from Jews, he thought that the country 'wasn't just a graveyard, it was a gigantic thieves' warehouse [...]. Anywhere I turned in that country, I might face something that had belonged to a murdered relative' (p. 4). He was raised to loathe the country and everything it produced. The children of Holocaust survivors frequently withhold their tourist or other funds from the country that wronged them as an act of 'restored equity' (Podoshen, 2006).

During an interview, Yoav Sapir, who offers private tours of Jewish Berlin, observed that 'being Jewish' for a long time meant *not* going to Germany, but now

that many people have gone for one reason or another—business travel or a European tour that includes stops in Germany—many Jews visit, contrary to historical apprehension. Assessing the current nation personally has become a religious act. The 'pilgrimage,' as Sapir called it, helps the individual affirm his Jewish identity and reconcile life-long anxieties about the nation. However, while numerous Jews express apprehension at visiting Germany in their travel narratives, online reviews, and private interviews, those individuals almost uniformly conclude that Germans are acknowledging their past atrocities and erecting such an abundance of memorials and education centres that future generations cannot be unaware of that past.

While substantial bodies of scholarship examine the dark tourism of visiting the remains of Nazi death camps, the most extensive research on Jewish tourism to such sites focuses on sites in Poland (Feldman, 2008; Kugelmass, 1992; Kugelmass, 1995; Reynolds, 2018; for a detailed literature review, see Podoshen, 2017). Critique of so-called Holocaust tourism has come from many directions, but one of the primary criticisms is that it ignores hundreds of years of innovative, robust Jewish communities. Israel's March of the Living tour, which sends Israeli, American, and other teenagers to witness the death camps in Poland, has been accused of deliberately ignoring the history and contemporary lives of Polish Jews in order to fuel nationalistic aims (Feldman, 2008; Lehrer, 2013). Fruitful approaches to dark tourism include discussions of certain locations as sites of conscience that can teach lessons to visitors (Ševčenko, 2011), though Brigitte Sion (2017) argues that 'death tourism' has largely replaced Jewish memorial pilgrimage in Europe. In comparison to Jewish travel to former Soviet bloc countries, Jewish tourism in Berlin has attracted minimal scholarly attention (Brown, 2015; Coles, 2004; Gruber, 2002; Leshem, 2013; Podoshen, 2006).

### Germany's Approach to 'Jewish' Tourism

Germany has taken a particular interest in catering to foreign Jewish tourists. In the 1980s, the German National Tourist Office published the first edition of its now-lengthy brochure *Germany for the Jewish Traveler* for Jewish American tourists. According to the

most recent edition, the first ‘received worldwide acclaim and not a trace of the criticism that some feared.’ Brigit Sion (2010, p. 248) writes that the 1997 edition ‘simultaneously promotes and sanitises Holocaust memory in its effort to attract Jews who have a deep aversion to Germany, but who might be willing to make a Holocaust-themed trip.’ This targeted marketing was one of several initiatives to attract interest groups, such as LGBT travellers and outdoor enthusiasts. The Tourist Office mailed copies of the 2000 edition to 3,600 American rabbis, extolling the attractions of forty-five German cities (Coles, 2004). The current brochure’s ‘Welcome to Germany’ page uses typical promotional language, describing ‘exquisite villages,’ a ‘wealth of cultural attractions,’ ‘glorious architecture,’ and ‘world-class fashion.’ It then explains how leaders remade Germany after WWII and forged close relations with Israel.

Contrary to Holocaust education centres and memorials throughout the country, which provide ample evidence and explanations based on the historical record, it expresses bewilderment at how such a thing could have occurred in a world-renowned civilisation, depicting the Nazi era as an anomalous flaw in an otherwise brilliant tapestry. Konrad Adenauer’s 1951 meeting with David Ben Gurion is used as evidence to show that ‘a new generation of Germans deserved the opportunity to demonstrate that a better future was possible.’ It also employs a quotation from a Jewish scholar to persuade readers that visiting Germany today demonstrates the Nazi’s failure and recognises the good work of the ‘other Germany’ to deal with its past. This approach of telling Jews that they should feel obligated to visit Germany is atypical of the language used in all other government publications, which openly acknowledge Nazi crimes, explain how the country has worked to overcome them, and humbly invites foreign Jews to judge that progress for themselves.

For example, a section for Jewish travellers on the official national tourism website begins:

Even though we are decades removed from World War II, the crimes committed against the Jewish People during the Nazi regime re-

tain a singular identity in the annals of horror. Today’s Germany is home to the third-largest Jewish community in Western Europe, indeed the only European Jewish community that is growing rather than shrinking. Visiting today’s Germany is a lesson in how a nation has sought to come to terms with a devastating legacy. After the war, a dedicated number of Germans were at the forefront of a movement to begin the long road, not only of atonement and redress, but towards the building of a new Germany. It is in this spirit that we are honoured to convey a special invitation to the Jews of the world to visit our country. As we do so, it would be naïve not to recognise that for many, contemplating a visit to Germany may never be without a mixture of emotions.

Its ‘Jewish Traveler from A to Z’ menu allows consumers to select one of dozens of cities (and former concentration camps), read a brief, but detailed history of Jewish life in that region and a description of its Jewish-related sites. The page for each city does not shy away from listing connections to medieval pogroms or the Nazi period, but also describes the current community and provides, when possible, contact information for the town’s Jewish community organisations. In a 2002 collaborative programme with the Israeli tourist bureau, Lufthansa, and the TAL Travel company, the German Tourist Office planned ‘joint visits’ to Germany and Israel for American Jews (Coles, 2004). While not focused on tourism specifically, the ‘About Germany’ section of the German Embassy in the United States’s website features four topics, one of which is ‘Jewish Life in Modern Germany and Historic Responsibility.’ Seemingly out of place alongside the broad categories of business, international relations, and education, it shows how much this issue is at the forefront of German public relations. In this vein, the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy works with Action Reconciliation Service for Peace and German Jewish organisations to sponsor 250 young Jewish Americans to visit Germany each year through Germany Close Up: American Jews Meet Modern Germany. A related programme has sent

young Germans to volunteer in the US for nearly fifty years, seeking to strengthen relationships with American Jews.

The differences between these statements and that of the *Germany for the Jewish Traveler* brochure are stark. Particularly incongruous are the latter's defensive and evasive statements and the gracious acknowledgement of guilt and promises for the future on the tourist and embassy websites. Admittedly, the sincerity of these organisations cannot be measured—all seek financial gains through international commerce and tourism—but the gesture is likely appreciated by some and may smooth the way for apprehensive Jewish tourists. However, while the guides I interviewed were aware of the government's attempts to mend this relationship, not a single tourist I spoke to had encountered these publications or websites. When I informed Jewish tourists of this rhetoric during our interviews, it confirmed their existing impression that Germany was heavily invested in changing its reputation with the Jewish community.

#### **Berlin's Holocaust and Jewish-Themed Sites**

Berlin offers numerous sites for visitors interested in Jewish history and culture and the Holocaust, and I observed visitors at every site during the summer of 2018. Due to its central location, most visitors to Berlin will encounter the Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe and a smaller percentage also explore its underground information centre, though long wait times and its discrete entrance may deter casual or rushed visitors. The less-centrally located Jewish Museum attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, in no small part due to Liebeskind's architecture, famous for physical voids that represent the missing elements of European Jewish culture. Throughout the city, observant visitors will notice *Stolpersteinen*, metal 'stumbling stones' inscribed with information about Holocaust victims who lived or worked at the sites of these small but powerful memorials. For under \$20, Insider Tours offers a walking tour (available in English or Hebrew) of numerous sites in the Scheunenviertel, the old Jewish quarter. Participants hear about the origins of the Jewish community in Berlin; the sacrifices of Jewish soldiers during WWI; a description of the thriving

intellectual community prior to WWII marked by the monument at Moses Mendelssohn's house, the Altes Synagogue, and the house of Regina Jonas, often considered to be the first female rabbi; and several sites related to the Holocaust. The tour visits Otto Weidt's Workshop for the Blind, a Jewish cemetery, the site of a Jewish high school, the Missing House memorial, and the Rosenstrasse Monument, which honours gentle women who successfully protested the arrest of their Jewish husbands. The tour ends at the security-bedecked Neue Synagogue. It is not an active house of worship, and Berlin's other synagogues are not open to the public. The city's three largest tour companies also offer daily excursions to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, an hour train ride from the city centre. Less frequented Holocaust memorials include the Trains to Life-Trains to Death Kindertransport memorial at Friedrichstrasse, the camp memorial at Wittenbergplatz, the Weissensee Cemetery, Steglitz's Mirrored Wall Memorial, Platform 17 in Gruenewald, the Places of Memory in Bavarianplatz, the House of the Wannsee Conference, and numerous markers at the sites of former synagogues, some of which were destroyed on Kristallnacht. In addition to these memorials, fifteen Sites of Remembrance, educational centres that teach about specific aspects of the Holocaust, can be found in the larger Berlin-Brandenburg region. Many of the city's other tourist sites, like the history and technology museums, incorporate information about Jewish culture and the Holocaust. Additionally, several private guides help visitors of German Jewish heritage find the sites related to their ancestors. However, whether tourists have genealogical ties to Germany or not, the nation plays a looming role in collective Jewish memory.

Several guidebooks assist Jewish tourists in Germany. Ben Frank (2018) has published four editions of his *Travel Guide to Jewish Europe*, which frames itself as 'a perfect companion for those seeking their roots in Europe or for those searching for places where relatives and friends once lived.' Reminding readers that Jewish history in the lands that constitute present-day Germany long predate the formation of that state, Billie Ann Lopez and Peter Hirsch's (1998) *Traveler's Guide to Jewish Germany* also lists 'roots' tourists as

one of their primary audiences. Barkan (2016) provides specialised information in *Berlin for Jews: A Twenty-First-Century Companion*. The Jewish Museum's gift shop sells several additional books on Jewish Berlin, but only one is translated into English for foreign travellers.

Five guides offer private tours of Jewish Berlin for foreign Jewish tourists. Over email exchanges and during in-person interviews, these guides said that tourists choose their services for a more personalised experience, for insight to Berlin's Jewish community, and, frequently, because they feel more comfortable facing Berlin, a city that causes extreme anxiety for some, alongside an informed Jewish companion. While the guides all visit the sites listed above, they present Jewish Berlin in different ways. The website of private guide Eyal Roth, for example, tells a solely devastating narrative of persecution and destruction of the Jewish people from their earliest settlement in the area in an essay titled 'Early Jewish Settlement in Berlin: A Somewhat Depressing Chronicle,' followed by explanations of several memorials and the destruction they commemorate. The subtitle of his regular Jewish heritage tour is 'A Walk Through a Lost World.'

In contrast, Nadav Gablinger emphasises the revitalised Jewish community and offers additional tours about contemporary Jewish and Israeli life in Berlin. This reveals an agenda of presenting Jewish Berlin from a more positive perspective, but he and others are still subject to the interests of their clients. Few tourists request those neighbourhood tours but ask their guides many personal questions about their lives as Jews in Berlin. Yoav and Natalie Sapir counter both perspectives by not dwelling on negative experiences or revitalisation but try to correct what their website describes as a 'common misconception (or hype) about our Jewish community that supposedly has been "revived."' They argue that not only is the total population less than a tenth of its pre-war status, but the vast majority of Jews in Berlin are immigrants or the children of immigrants. Most do not speak German as their native tongue, and most are not Reform Jews, characteristics of the pre-war community. Indeed, nearly all of the private and group tour guides are immigrants or sojourners; most of the private guides

specialising in Jewish tours are Israeli, and the larger companies hire several Israeli guides for tours of Jewish Berlin and Sachsenhausen. The Jüdische Gemeinde zu Berlin, the umbrella Jewish organisation in Berlin, and the Sapirs describe these current residents as 'Jews in Germany' rather than 'German Jews.'

The Jewish-related destinations in Berlin are overwhelmingly memorials of one type or another. Very few provide information about Jewish history or contemporary culture. Nearly all other sites are part of Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Sometimes translated as 'memory work,' this term refers to Germany's efforts to grapple with the atrocities committed by their former government and populous. The most significant Jewish sites are of relatively recent origin. The Jewish Museum opened in 2001, and the central monument near the Tiergarten was completed in 2005. These projects took decades of planning and debate, stalled in no small part by the city and nation's post-war division and subsequent reunification in 1990. Ruth Gruber (2002) argues that the suffering of the Holocaust was 'universalised' and equated with all other wartime difficulties until the 1980s, when public critique and official commemoration of Holocaust victims became more common. The Neue Synagogue hosts a poorly-advertised exhibit that offers information about a pre-war Jewish community and, if visitors are not overwhelmed by its Holocaust memorials and exhibits and architecture, the Jewish Museum offers an exhibition on Jewish culture. The latter, a state-owned museum, has fought to demonstrate that it is not simply a museum of the Holocaust, as people might presume. An early marketing campaign depicted surprising images, like a split coconut revealing a halved orange inside, with the tagline *Nicht das, was Sie erwarten* (Not what you were expecting). It was one of nine 'quasi-surreal' images placed on 2,500 billboards throughout the country in 2005 (Chametzky, 2008). Though it sought to advertise that it was not yet another Holocaust centre, due to renovations, all exhibits about Jewish culture were closed for renovation during my research in 2018. Insider Tours' Jewish Berlin tour goes into the greatest detail about the notable past of Jewish communities in Berlin. In general, Berlin's sites of Jewish interest tell visitors far

more about Germany, its methods of coping with past crimes, and perhaps its public relations agenda than it does about Jewish culture or tradition.

### Visitor Experiences

I assessed visitor experience through netnography and on-site interviews and observations. My netnographic data included over 10,000 TripAdvisor reviews of private guides, group tours, and sites, in addition to the comments displayed on the websites of private tour guides and companies. While netnographic data has certain drawbacks (see Mkono, 2012; Podoshen & Hunt, 2011) and the guide Yoav Sapir said that only about half of his clients post reviews, this approach allowed me to access thousands of reviews in multiple languages stretching back to 2008.

Based on TripAdvisor reviews, people seek Jewish aspects of Berlin for a variety of reasons. Many tourists feel the need to be a witness to genocide, while others seek family roots. Aware that Jewish life is an important part of Berlin history, many Jews and non-Jews choose to engage private guides or join group tours to learn more about these issues and related sites. Several reviews admit discomfort at engaging in 'atrocious tourism,' as a man from Glasgow described a tour of Sachsenhausen. Another wrote:

I am a bit ambivalent about tours like this since I find it hard to reconcile tourism with what happened in a camp like this. I would also like to congratulate [the guide] on the sensitivity with which he dealt with this difficult balance between tourism, history and memorial. At appropriate intervals, he took time to remind us what we were seeing and about the people these things had happened to. I particularly appreciated the respectful manner in which he related the events here to events beyond ww2 and its aftermath.

The hundreds of reviews for the Jewish Quarter walks and Sachsenhausen day trips offered by Insider Tours (IT) and Original Berlin Walks (OBW) are overwhelmingly positive, averaging (by rounding) 5/5. 92 per cent of reviewers describe the tours as excellent.

Three reviewers on OBW's Sachsenhausen trip identified themselves as the children of Holocaust survivors who felt uneasy about taking a group tour to such a personally sensitive location but unanimously commended the guides' sensitivity and the value of the experience.

Reviews on TripAdvisor recount several successful 'roots' pilgrimages, and I learned more from the guides themselves. A woman from Maine wrote,

Yoav took us to places that directly impacted my family. I learned so much I didn't know before. We stood on Platform 17 at Grunewald Station where 386 deportations from Berlin took place. I cannot imagine a more chilling experience. We learned and saw so much more that touched my soul. Words cannot alone express how extraordinary our tour with Yoav was.

Based on Sapir's help, she discovered two surviving second cousins in London during her Berlin visit. A Jewish tourist from Seattle also appreciated how Sapir gave him 'a better sense of [his] German heritage.' In an interview, Sapir said that the number of genealogical tours is slowly growing, but he had still only led four such tours in the past year.

Berlin's tour guides caution their customers to be prepared for difficult emotions, whether touring Sachsenhausen concentration camp or walking the streets of the old Jewish Quarter and advertise their ability to help visitors work through these experiences. Eyal Roth advertises that the tour might 'provoke an emotional response and it's my job to facilitate this and give space for it within the tour.' Similarly, in the revised edition of *Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to East-Central Europe*, author Ruth Gruber (1994, p. 3) warns that 'Jews and non-Jews alike who visit the places described in this book should be prepared to deal with a maelstrom of emotions.' As Erica Lehrer (2013, p. 15) wrote in her study of Jewish tourism in Krakow, even themed tours are 'often quite the opposite of package tourism. They are opportunities for unpacking baggage long carried but rarely examined.' TripAdvisor reviews suggest that the private guides in Berlin do this successfully. Milk and Honey Tours, a

company offering international Jewish-themed tours, posts comments from past customers that complement the guides' 'sensitive and compassionate' approach and their ability to make a 'rather "difficult" experience into something that we would have not missed for the world.' Another guest wrote:

I am writing to say how good it was to spend time with you in Berlin. My experience was so varied and complicated. Being able to talk with you and share some of the emotional impact was of tremendous value to me. Your thoughtful planning and knowledge showed me things I would not have learned about and your openness and honesty allowed me to speak honestly, which was a great relief. I was experiencing distress that I could not otherwise discuss. So, thank you for the many ways you offered a safe harbor.

Yoav Sapir claimed that his job was to accommodate those emotional experiences. He believes that the sites themselves are less important for visitors than the conversations he facilitates and his perspective as an Israeli Jew living in Berlin.

Some tourists respond to their experience with political statements. Sapir observed that American Jews frequently make analogies between Nazi horrors and the political climate of the United States under Donald Trump's presidency. His clients respond with, 'That's just what's happening in my country!' when he describes the increasing anti-Semitism of the 1930s. Sapir believes that Jewish American tourists come to 'reinforce their political identity', whether that be liberal or conservative. While conservative Jews offer sympathy regarding anti-Semitic acts perpetrated by Muslim refugees, believing Germans and Americans face that same threat, others praise Germany's open refugee policy, understanding it as penance for the Holocaust. I observed that some guides did not hesitate to share their political views, even when they contrasted with those of their clients, but one guide, requesting anonymity, said that s/he tries to stay apolitical and let tourists believe that their assumptions about her/his views are correct. Sapir said that he re-

ceives many questions, particularly from Americans, about his political views on Israel, Germany, and the refugee crisis. Other Jewish guides made similar statements and, on the tours I took, Jewish customers acted more interested in contemporary personal experiences and perspectives than learning about Jewish heritage. When my Israeli Insider Tours guide, Orit Arfa, promoted her autobiographical erotic novel of falling for a German man, at least half of the people on our tour wrote down the title after taking no notes and few photographs during the tour.

The identity of the guide made a notable difference to several reviewers. Multiple TripAdvisor reviews expressed tourists' initial dismay or disappointment that their guide for a Jewish-themed tour was not Jewish (though most are). All guides I encountered and interviewed identified themselves as Jewish online and in person. For travellers with sufficient financial resources, hiring a private guide-with an assurance of their Jewish identity-can be an attractive alternative. The guide Sue Arns states her Jewish identity and that of her driver at the top of numerous pages of her simple website. The first FAQ is 'Are you Jewish?' to which she answers, 'Yes, both of us are Jewish. Many of our clients think it is easier to be guided by a Jewish guide in Germany. And we agree.'

Numerous reviews of Eyal Roth and the Sapirs mention that having a Jewish guide made hearing these stories and grappling with the difficult history easier and more valuable. One praised the value of hearing stories from a child of survivors, while another wrote that Sapir's 'Israeli and Jewish background created a sense of trust and interest from our behalf, while his thorough interest in our Jewish history brought about a personal bond.' Reviewers who expressed apprehension of visiting Germany and Berlin complimented the guides' ability to, as a Jewish woman from Santa Monica wrote, 'gently ease me into a place where I could absorb the past, present, and future of Jewish Berlin.' Another wrote, 'I'm not sure I could have done it without Natalie.' A Jewish couple from Fort Lauderdale confessed to guide Sue Arns, 'As you know, we had been reluctant to visit Germany and especially Berlin, but we are so very glad we did and had you both show us your city. It is truly amazing, and we ap-

preciated your sharing it with us.' A couple from Minneapolis responded similarly. One visitor to Berlin on a Milk and Honey tour wrote, 'I still can't believe I let my foot fall onto German soil, and I credit the positive experience to you, your expertise and mostly to your warmth and enthusiasm. There are so many things that are just now filtering into my consciousness and a million things I'd like to see again or explore more [...] perhaps, someday.' Reviews of both private and group tours emphasise the key role their guide played in their experience.

### Conclusions

Studies of Armenian diaspora tourism to Turkey offer a helpful comparative context for examining Jewish tourism to Germany. In both cases, a government regime committed genocide against a minority population several generations ago. Most home villages and extended family are gone. Turan and Bakalian (2015, p. 173) argue that diaspora 'pilgrimage nurtures the Armenian diaspora by preserving and reimagining its identity.' They view it as a rite of passage that fosters *communitas*. A similar experience transpires in Germany, where Jewish travellers enter a nation that permanently changed the diaspora community. It reinforces their identity as Jews, and for some, their political identity as well. Turan and Bakalian argue that physically viewing the land and meeting its people (and realising that they are not wholly evil) can heal psychological wounds for the children and grandchildren of survivors. This healing phenomenon is substantiated by people like Lev Raphael who confronted the 'German ghosts' that haunted his childhood (45) and recent travellers who 'felt more complete' and could accept the past more easily after visiting Germany. Turan and Bakalian also described the surprising, and not always welcome, attachment Armenians felt toward the people and landscape of Anatolia. Raphael and others report similar feelings, unexpectedly developing deep attachments to Germany, especially Berlin.

Travelling to Germany, particularly Berlin, becomes a religious ritual of reconciliation for many Jews. Kugelmass (1994, p. 175) calls the experience a 'secular ritual' and describes how it 'confirms who they are as

Jews.' While he believes such travel is shallower than a pilgrimage, he agrees that the experiences appropriate many of its elements, such as liminality and its power to change individual lives. Yoav Sapir invoked the religious language of pilgrimage during our interview as well. He believes that visiting Berlin and seeing how Germans have dealt with their nation's past atrocities is a significant religious act that relates to and affects their identity as Jews. Kugelmass (1994, p. 176) quotes a grandson of survivors who said upon visiting Birkenau, 'I am reborn, in my present life. As witness, not as survivor.' Cohen (1992, pp. 58–59) concludes that the functional aspect of pilgrimage 'not only recreates and revitalises the individual but also reinforces his commitment to basic cultural values; he is restituted to, and reconciled with, his role and position in society.' This occurs among foreign Jews who travel to Berlin, face the nightmares of their people's past, and manage to reconcile the Nazi terror with the Germany of today. During a Jewish Berlin walking tour, a 73-year-old Canadian Jew confided to me why he decided to visit Berlin after avoided the country for his entire life. Brought up with considerable anti-German sentiments—his father fought in World War II, and his mother survived the London Blitz, he credited Canadian tolerance for his ability to forgive the current nation, but also expressed his satisfaction that the country had reconciled its past without forgetting it.

Similarly, Basu (2007, p. 221) acknowledges that pilgrimages to one's roots become 'personal therapeutic acts, influenced as much by popular psychology as more institutionalised ritual practices.' Along those lines, tourist Evie Woolstone, a child of German Jewish refugees and client of guide Sue Arns, expressed a common perception that 'it did feel as though Berlin was trying to atone for its guilty past [...] I am glad that I went but throughout felt slightly unsettled by the fact of actually being in Germany and all the emotions that this entailed.'

Germany's *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* looms so heavily in Berlin that focusing on anything but the nation's response to the atrocities is difficult. Over 5,000 Stolpersteine dot the sidewalks of Berlin; the blocks surrounding Bavarianplatz are replete with dozens of signs detailing race legislation; the memorial to



murdered Jews is vast and complemented by nearby memorials dedicated to politicians and other Germans who fought against the Nazis, murdered Sinti and Roma, people murdered for having physical or mental disabilities, and murdered homosexuals. Plaques commemorating the sites of former synagogues far outnumber active religious sites or Jewish organisations. Opportunities to learn about the influential communities of German Jews who once lived in Berlin are scarce, and few tourists request tours about contemporary Jewish life. These performances of guilt and repentance have the power to overwhelm the atrocities themselves. The subject of German guilt and Germany's production of public memory and memorialisation dominated the weeks I spent visiting sites and interviewing guides and tourists, not sorrow or thoughtful contemplation about the loss of life and destruction of a community. My research supports Sapir's theory that Germany's installation of memorials to the Holocaust in recent decades, particularly those in Berlin, directly contributes to foreign Jews' increasing acceptance of the country. While the origins of these memorials are as diverse and unique as their forms, the visitors I spoke with tend to read the memorials as a formally organised and coordinated display of national guilt and repentance.

Berlin is in an admittedly difficult position. Promoting a thriving Jewish culture (either contemporary or pre-war) would be seen by some as an attempt to gloss over past crimes. Moreover, while some Jews will refuse to set foot on German soil, others who show hesitancy are frequently convinced by the plethora of memorials that Germany is making clear efforts to educate its citizens about the nation's mistakes and showing penance by devoting resources to those ends and supporting relatively open policies toward refugees today. How Germans feel about wartime crimes or the ubiquity of memorials is unclear to the casual visitor, particularly to the Jewish visitor who chooses a Jewish, and most likely Israeli, guide, but at least two messages conveyed by the sheer mass of monuments is clear: Germany wants to appear repentant and is making concerted efforts to educate its populace about these crimes. While German officials enact penance through the construction of memorials and museums to the

Jews of Europe, they are, through the same act, also earning the tourist money of and perhaps reconciliation with foreign Jewish communities. My research showed that online reviews, personal interviews, and autobiographical works from Jewish visitors to Berlin are overwhelmingly positive. While some attribute their trip's success to the sensitivity of their Jewish guide, others articulate that they have personally reconciled their fear and anger related to Nazi Germany with the nation today.

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