OPENING TIMES AND ADDRESS

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Tiergartenstraße 4, 10785 Berlin
Bus: Philharmonie (200), Kulturforum or Varian-Fry-Straße (M 48, M 85)
S-Bahn (urban rail): Potsdamer Platz (S 1, S 2, S 25)
U-Bahn (underground): Potsdamer Platz (U2)

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Exhibition Planning and content
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Exhibition catalogue in German and easy read format
Please order at info@stiftung-denkmal.de

REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION

It was not until the 1980s that sustained efforts were made to establish memorial sites and monuments at the former killing centres and other sites of perpetration. In 1989 a memorial plaque was put up at Tiergartenstraße 4, the administrative headquarters of the T4 operation. The working group »T4 Round Table« was founded in 2007. Following an initiative by this group, the temporary Memorial of the Grey Buses, designed by Horst Hoheisel and Andreas Knitz, was placed in front of the Berlin Philharmonic concert hall in 2008. In November 2013, a memorial to the victims of forced sterilisation and »euthanasia« under the National Socialist regime was inaugurated in the grounds of the clinic in Berlin-Buch, which served as the main transit camp for victims from Berlin. The memorial was designed by the artist Patricia Pisani.

Further information
www.memorialmuseums.org

THE MEMORIAL AND INFORMATION POINT FOR THE VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST »EUTHANASIA« KILLINGS

In November 2011, the German Bundestag voted to establish a »Memorial for the Victims of National Socialist »Euthanasia« Killings« on the historic grounds of the administrative headquarters of the T4 programme. The state of Berlin subsequently launched a competition to design the memorial. The winning entry by the architect Ursula Wilms and the landscape architects Nikolaus Kollius and Heinz W. Hallmann consists of a 24-metre-long wall made of clear light blue glass and set into a dark grey concrete surface that gently slopes towards the centre. The accompanying outdoor exhibition provides information about the history of the »euthanasia« killings and their legacy up to the present-day.

The architect Ursula Wilms (*1963) also designed the new documentation centre at the Topography of Terror with the landscape architect Heinz W. Hallmann (*1940). The artist Nikolaus Kollius (*1953) has worked on many architectural projects.

Further information
www.t4-denkmal.de
The PATH TO THE HOLOCAUST

The first patients were murdered following the German invasion of Poland in autumn 1939. SS units shot up to 17,000 psychiatric patients – as well as most of their doctors and carers – in remote forests in the former «Polish corridor» (the strip of land giving Poland access to the Baltic Sea after World War I). In the period up to December 1939, 400 psychiatric patients became the first to be murdered by gas at Fort VII in Płaszów. In spring 1940, the SS special detachment headed by Herbert Lange murdered almost 2,000 patients with mental disabilities using «gas vans» in Saldau (East Prussia). In December 1941, it began to operate the first killing centre on Polish soil at Chelmno. Over 152,000 people, most of them Jews, had been murdered here by 1944. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, at least 17,000 patients from psychiatric institutions and «homes for the disabled» were brutally murdered. By 1943, over 90 employees from the T4 headquarters had been assigned to the killing centres at Belzec, Sobibór and Treblinka as part of «Operation Reinhard», the programme responsible for the mass murder of around 1.6 million Jews as well as thousands of Sinti and Roma.

ANNA LEHNKERING (1915 – 1940)

Anna Lahnkering grew up in the Ruhr region of Germany. Her parents ran a restaurant. She was a sweet, mild-mannered child who had learning difficulties. Classified as having a «hereditary disease», she was forcibly sterilised in 1935 and admitted to Bedburg-Hau psychiatric hospital the following year. Staff initially described her as a placid and quiet patient, but later found her to be increasingly difficult. She was deemed incapable of working. A committee of doctors working on the T4 programme selected her to die in March 1940 and she was asphyxiated by gas in the Grafeneck killing centre.

GRIGORIJ SCHAMRIZKIJ (1889 – 1945)

Grigorij Schamrzkij, originally from the Ukraine, was brought to Germany during the World War II to work as a forced labourer. He had to work in a chemicals factory in Hessen and on the western border of Germany. After being diagnosed with open tuberculosis, he was transferred to a hospital camp for forced labourers. On 2 March 1945, he was moved to the Hadamar psychiatric clinic. He died of an overdose of sedatives, probably on the same day that he arrived.

AFTER THE WAR

Very few of the perpetrators and accomplices of the National Socialist «euthanasia» killings were brought to justice. The only serious attempts to pursue criminal proceedings came directly after the end of the war, for example with the Nuremberg Doctors Trial in 1946–47. Many of the doctors who had been involved in the crimes continued to practice after the war. For many years both state and society refused to acknowledge the victims. In West Germany, only a small minority of those who had undergone forced sterilisation were eligible for payments under the Federal Compensation Law. In 1957, the West German government declared that the 1933 «Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring» was not a «typical» example of National Socialist legislation. This law was only repealed in 2002. East Germany and Austria also did little to confront the «euthanasia» killings.

»OPERATION T4« AND »EUTHANASIA«, 1940 – 1945

The murder of tens of thousands of patients with physical or mental disabilities and of people classed as socially or «racially» undesirable was the first systematic mass crime to be carried out by the National Socialist regime. It was the first step towards the genocide of European Jews. The «euthanasia» programme, codenamed »Operation T4«, was developed by a department set up in Hitler’s private Chancellery with over 60 employees. From April 1940, the programme was planned and coordinated in a villa at the south of Berlin’s Tiergarten park. At the T4 headquarters, which took its name from the villa’s address at Tiergartenstraße 4, doctors and administrators gathered information on patients from psychiatric clinics and care homes and selected those who were to be killed. They also coordinated the transport of these patients to six purpose-built gassing centres on German territory. By August 1941, doctors had murdered over 70,000 people. By 1945, a further 90,000 had been killed through starvation, neglect or an overdose of medication. The crimes committed under »Operation T4« were just one aspect of the mass murder of hospital patients, people in need of care or socially marginalised groups in Nazi-occupied Europe. An estimated 300,000 people died as a result.

The Berlin Philharmonic concert hall was built on the grounds of the former villa and its neighbouring houses. It was designed by Hans Scharoun (1893 – 1972) and opened in 1963. The foyer of this world-famous concert hall is therefore located on part of the site formerly occupied by the historic villa and the T4 administrative headquarters.

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