



REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION

Only a few perpetrators and accomplices of the National Socialist »Euthanasia« killings were put to justice. Many of the medical doctors involved in the crimes remained active in their profession after the end of the Second World War. Both East and West Germany denied recognition to the victims. It was not until the 1980s that memorial sites and monuments were established at the former killing centres and other sites of perpetration.

In 1989 a memorial plaque was put up at the former site of Tiergartenstraße 4, the administrative headquarters of »Operation T4«. The working group »T4 Round Table« was founded in 2007 to consider ways of rearranging the memorial site.

www.memorialmuseums.org

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Address

Tiergartenstrasse 4, 10785 Berlin

Public transport

S + U-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz

Foundation

Phone +49–(0)30–26 39 43–11, info@stiftung-denkmal.de
www.stiftung-denkmal.de

Visitor services

Mon–Thurs 10–4 pm, Fri 10–1 pm
Phone +49–(0)30–26 39 43–36, Fax –21
besucherservice@stiftung-denkmal.de

Press

Phone +49–(0)30–26 39 43–26
presse@stiftung-denkmal.de

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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 winning design by the architect Ursula Wilms, the artist Nikolaus Koliusis and the landscape architect Heinz W. Hallmann consists of a 24-metre-long wall made of transparent blue glass and set into a dark grey concrete surface that gently slopes towards the centre. The inauguration ceremony for the memorial took place on 2 September 2014. The accompanying outdoor exhibition provides information about the history of the »Euthanasia« killings and their legacy up to the present-day.

www.t4-denkmal.de



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

The murder of tens of thousands of patients with physical or mental disabilities and of people classified as socially or »racially« undesirable was the first systematic mass crime to be carried out by the National Socialist regime. It is considered to have been the first step towards the genocide of the Jews of Europe.

The »euthanasia« programme was developed by a department set up in Hitler's Chancellery with over 60 employees. From April 1940, the programme was planned and coordinated in a villa at the Berlin address Tiergartenstraße 4 which gave »Operation T4« its name. From here, 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 in the Reich.

By August 1941, doctors have murdered over 70,000 people. By 1945, a further 90,000 had been killed through deliberate starvation, neglect or lethal medication. The total number of victims in German-occupied Europe is estimated at 300,000.

The Berlin Philharmonic concert hall was built on the grounds of the former villa at Tiergartenstraße 4 and its neighbouring houses. It was designed by Hans Scharoun (1893–1972) and opened in 1963.



BIOGRAPHIES

Anna Lehnkering (*1915) grew up in the Ruhr region of Germany. Her parents ran a restaurant. She was a mild-mannered child who had learning difficulties. Classed 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.

During the Second World War, Grigoriy Shamritskiy (*1889) was brought from his native Ukraine to Germany as a forced labourer. He had to work in a chemical plant in Hessen and on the western border of Germany. After having been diagnosed with open tuberculosis, he was transferred to an »infirmary camp« for forced labourers. On 2 March 1945, he was moved in a collective transport to the Hadamar psychiatric clinic. Probably on the day of his arrival, he was killed by an overdose of sedatives administered by staff.

Picture above: Anna Lenkering (left) with a friend, around 1932
© Sigrid Falkenstein; to the right: Grigoriy Shamritskiy wearing a badge identifying him as an East European forced labourer, around 1945
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Outside page, left: Memorial plaque by Volker Bartsch, inaugurated on 1 September 1989 © gedenkort-t4.eu

Title: Views of the Memorial and Information Point
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