

Under the Shadows of the Eiffel Tower: Holocaust *Souvenirs* of Paris



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As demonstrated in my thesis research, *"For Those who Live in the Sun:" Holocaust Commemoration in the Southeastern United States*, Holocaust commemoration is a vast, multifaceted enterprise.¹ I wanted to explore this topic further by expanding my studies to Paris with the College of Charleston's Versailles Fellowship program. I have found that diverse styles and forms have continued to emerge, and a chronology of types has evolved throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the United States, Holocaust remembrance began with narratives, communicated as oral histories and sermons, published in books, journals, newspapers, and magazines, and presented in dramatic performances. Groups soon sought something more substantial to represent the horror that the Holocaust wrought. Institutions, such as synagogues, community centers, and businesses, were adorned with plaques, stained glass windows, and displays containing Holocaust relics, all commemorating the Shoah.² The 1980s and 1990s brought another transformation—suddenly, memorialization caught public attention. Large memorials were erected in public parks, creating physical spaces for commemoration and inviting community gatherings. The American chronology of memorialization has progressed into the twenty-first century, with educational programs implemented in conjunction with the built environment. Interestingly, Parisian memorials followed a similar chronology and they possess comparable variety.

I chose to continue studying Holocaust commemoration to gain a global perspective by researching the forms and evolution found in Europe, with Paris as the focus of the study. The purpose of this research is to analyze the evolution of Shoah commemoration and the emergence of physical structures—monuments, memorials, and museums. This is illustrated through the exploration of several case studies in Paris. Memorials will outlast eyewitnesses, and they have the potential to exist longer

¹ Lauren Cannady, "For Those Who Live in the Sun: Holocaust Commemoration in the Southeastern United States" (Master's thesis, Clemson University and College of Charleston, 2011).

² Shoah is the Hebrew word for Holocaust.

than original Holocaust structures. Through their utilization and the production of didactic tools, the Shoah will be remembered. While the use of tangible and intangible memorials may be a delicate, tenuous balance, their co-dependence is crucial if the memory of the Holocaust is to be maintained for future generations. This paper serves as yet another “monument”, an attempt to memorialize the victims, honor the survivors, and educate the public. Until genocide ends, until doubters believe, remembrance must continue.

The Holocaust in France

The Jewish presence in France began as early as the first century C.E., but a recurring pattern of banishment and return due to anti-Semitism has continued through the 20th century. The Middle Ages was a prosperous time for Jews in France, especially in Paris, until they were expelled in 1394. Alsace and Lorraine were one of a couple French territories where they were welcomed between the 14th and 17th centuries. This changed in 1791 during the French Revolution when Jews were granted full political, legal, and social equality, encouraging growth and mobility throughout France. “This transformation created a highly integrated community characterized by assimilation, patriotism and, despite the poisonous Dreyfus Affair of the 1890s³, a strong faith in the French state.”⁴ The 19th and 20th century immigration quadrupled the Jewish population and two main groups of Jews were evident in 1939: Francophone Jews and the “radical, religious, Yiddish-speaking, poor ‘foreign’ Jews.”⁵ There was a

³ Captain Alfred Dreyfus was a French Jew of Alsatian descent. He was wrongly convicted of revealing military secrets to the German embassy. Later it was revealed that the French military framed him and concealed information proving that Captain Dreyfus was innocent, thus creating a division between French societies.

⁴ Martin Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe: An Historical Guide* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 13-16.

⁵ *Ibid.*

division between these two groups, which would prove to be significant during the Holocaust, as the two groups had very different fates.⁶

In May 1940, France fell to Germany. Within a month, the country was divided into two zones: the occupied north, known as the French Republic, which functioned directly under German control, and the south, known as the French State, governed by the Vichy regime of Mr. Marshal Petain. In fact, Vichy had jurisdiction over the north zone as well, as long as its laws did not clash with those of the Germans. Petain's administration played a lead role in France's Holocaust, since it was he who agreed to collaborate with the Nazis in exchange for France's ability to remain undivided between the Axis Powers of Germany and Italy.⁷

Due to this collaboration and the French reluctance to admit its complicity with German Nazis, the history of the Holocaust in France is more contentious and perplexing than in almost any other nation. While most nations were fighting Germany's aggression in an attempt to defend their people, Vichy France was only one of two nominally autonomous regimes to voluntarily hand over Jews from its territory to the Nazis.⁸ This anomalous situation was controlled by southern France's collaborationist government. In fact, Vichy introduced several anti-Semitic laws without the influence of the Nazis. French officials collaborated with the Nazi party to locate and deport foreign Jews residing in France. French authorities operated its internment camps. Quite differently, almost 76 percent of French Jews⁹ survived the Holocaust, thanks to a minority of many private organizations and French citizens. Thus, the

⁶ Paragraph is cited from Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe*, 13 and Susan Zuccotti, *The Holocaust, the French, and the Jews* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), 7-8 and 15.

⁷ Entire paragraph is cited from Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), 33, 40-44 and Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe: An Historical Guide*, 13 and Donna F. Ryan, *The Holocaust & the Jews of Marseille: The Enforcement of Anti-Semitic Policies in Vichy France*, (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1996) 207-208.

⁸ Slovakia also voluntarily deported its Jews.

⁹ When the term "French Jews" is used, it represents those whom were not recent immigrants residing in France. Instead, "French Jews" are citizens of France. This statistic is even more illustrative if compared to countries like Lithuania, where 95% percent of Jews were killed.

stateless Jews residing in France,¹⁰ and those who were considered French Jewish citizens,¹¹ were treated differently.¹²

Parisian Commemoration

In 1939, Paris was home to approximately 200,000 Jews, almost two-thirds of the total French Jewish population. Historically, the vibrant Jewish community inhabited Le Marais in the third and fourth districts (called *arrondissements*) and many have returned to this area after the Second World War. Today Paris has an approximate Jewish population of 300,000. As one of the biggest Jewish communities in Europe, it appears to have survived the Holocaust with its spirit and diversity intact.¹³ This has created a catalyst for commemoration. In many cases, survivors were supported by younger generations in their efforts to spearhead memorial initiatives. Hence, while private Parisian commemoration did occur before 1990, the majority of French public memorials have been constructed in the past twenty years.¹⁴

The France's role in the Holocaust is now acknowledged in modern memorials and museums, and new commemoration structures continue to be designed, including some considered among the most impressive memorial sites across Europe. Private organizations and the French government are working together to memorialize its past.

¹⁰ State-less Jews residing in France were immigrants, but they may have been residents for many years. However, they were not considered French. They received no protection from the French government, even if they had previously been given the impression that France would be a safe location.

¹¹ The Jews of French North African colonies, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, were considered French citizens.

¹² Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe: An Historical Guide*, 13-15.

¹³ Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe: An Historical Guide*, 17.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 16.

Holocaust commemoration in Paris has a distinct chronology that has created diverse styles. Jews are known as people of “The Book.”¹⁵ Not surprisingly, early memorialization took intangible forms—research, documentation, publications, and plaques—produced with private support. Later, survivors wanted more substantial, permanent memorials. Beginning in the 1950s, the style shifted toward larger, structural forms. Monuments and museums, organized by private groups with the assistance of government-affiliated corporations, were erected on public property. Between the 1950s and 1990s, the memorials tended to be abstract, with sharp, basic designs. While they were impressive, they were impersonal. If any political blame was assigned, inscribed steles called out the Nazi party but failed to mention the Vichy government. This changed in the early 1990s when the French government began to openly discuss the State’s collaboration with the German Nazi party. Memorials now acknowledged and apologized for Vichy’s contribution to the Holocaust. Early private memorials became national sites of memory. New memorials received increasing support from the government. Today, memorials are in the public eye more than ever, via advertised by commemorative plaques and posters. Possibly most impressive, synagogues and the Jewish district were restored after the war. Visitors are able to experience Jewish culture as a living memorial, as a reminder of the past. Parisian commemoration continues to evolve, and Jewish groups are exploring new forms of memorialization.

Memorial de la Shoah and its Evolution

Memorial de la Shoah, at 17 Rue Geoffroy l’Asnier, is considered one of the most remarkable Holocaust museums in Europe. Its predecessor, Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu, was inaugurated in

¹⁵ The Book refers to the Bible.

1956 and was supported by its catalyst, the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC). The CDJC was created before World War II ended, by Isaac Schneersohn.¹⁶

Schneersohn, a refugee of the Russian Bolshevik era, organized a meeting of forty representatives of Jewish organizations in 1943 near Grenoble, France. Grenoble was an ideal location because it was outside the German-occupied zone. The mission of the gathering was to collect documents so that Jews could recover their rights and their place in French society as soon as the war ended. This group became known as the CDJC, with Schneersohn recognized as its founder. Until the war ended, Schneersohn performed his work at his home in Grenoble. After liberation, he relocated to Paris and partnered with Claude Kelman, Henri Hertz, Joseph Billig, Leon Poliakov, and Justin Godart and many others, to continue helping Jews reclaim rights and property.¹⁷

During the Nazi occupation, authorities and citizens claimed Jewish possessions as their own. The CDJC's first mission was to compose a file of pillaged materials, which was later documented in two books: *The Jews Under Occupation: Collection of French and German Texts 1940-1944* and *The Condition of the Jews Under German Occupation: 1940 to 1944 The Racial Legislation*. In 1945, the French government installed a service to reimburse Jews for their plundered goods. Schneersohn formed a team within the CDJC to review non-refunded persons and to encourage the French government to return any unclaimed objects to Jewish organizations. Unclaimed assets within bank accounts also were investigated, although little resulted from this examination.¹⁸

¹⁶ Entire paragraph is cited from *Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu*. Paris: Memorial de la Shoah. Rebbe Lubavitch was a prominent Hasidic rabbi.

¹⁷ Entire paragraph is cited from Memorial de la Shoah, "The History of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC)," *Memorial de la Shoah: Musee, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine*. Memorial de la Shoah, http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/b_content/getContentFromNumLinkAction.do?type=1&itemId=489 (accessed 24 May 2012).

¹⁸ Entire paragraph is cited from *Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu*. Paris: Memorial de la Shoah.

As early as 1945, historic research was conducted and the results published in books, articles, and magazines such as, *Jewish World*. *Jewish World*, which devoted itself to topics related to the destruction of the European Jews. It functions today as *The Journal of the History of the Holocaust*. Authors like Joseph Weill, Georges Wellers, Leon Poliakov, and Joseph Billig reported on their experiences in the French internment camps, the Jewish roundup in Paris, Italian-occupied France, and the genocide of Jews. Between 1945 and 1975, these subjects were discussed regularly in print and the *Publishing Center* released over forty-six monographs covering all fields of research related to the Holocaust.¹⁹

Between November 30 and December 10, 1947, the CDJC sponsored a conference titled *European Conference of Historical Commissions and Jewish Documentation Centers*. Under the guidance of Chairman, Justin Godart, delegates from Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Greece, Sweden, Germany, England, Palestine, Poland, the United States, Romania, Switzerland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia attended the conference. The group confirmed the need for scientific research based on the analysis of archival documents and coordination of all Jewish documentation centers. Following the conference, the European Coordination Committee held its first meeting. Schneersohn led the committee's board until it was dissolved, after many survivors moved to the United States or Israel.²⁰

Despite all of the CDJC's productive activity, Schneersohn was not receiving support to publish his magazine. His work—genocide of the Jews, history, and memory—interested only a few hundred readers. He felt that the Holocaust, as a subject, had not found the place it warranted in public

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

discourse. He wanted to change this, and so the idea to erect the tomb-like monument, the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu, was born.²¹

Schneersohn proposed combining several components within the monument: ashes from ghettos and camps, a documentation center, a conference room, and a permanent exhibit. Today this project sounds simple, however at the time, this was unimaginable and received little positive feedback. It was an expensive and complex scheme that went public in 1951. Even more polemics followed. The Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu was the only monument on the drawing boards to memorialize the six million Jews who were slaughtered. Thus, many people were sensitive to the idea and critical of its efforts because of the Vichy regime's participation. One of the strongest arguments against the monument was the conviction that the best way to remember the Holocaust was through writings. Many Jews felt that paper was stronger than stone. The CDJC continued to publish "spiritual monuments" but Schneersohn felt academic circles—such as specialists of history, justice, sociology, and politics—were the only audience for these articles. The CDJC wanted something more powerful and thought provoking to attract public attention. A monument would fulfill this need, and in the end, the project was supported by the rabbinate.²²

As the concept developed, Schneersohn decided to include a written portion as well, The Book of Remembrance. The Book of Remembrance had its own committee, charged with the task of composing a list of those who perished. Because these victims were given no proper burial, Schneersohn

²¹ Ibid.

²² Entire paragraph is cited from Memorial de la Shoah, "The History of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC)," *Memorial de la Shoah: Musee, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine*. Memorial de la Shoah, http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/b_content/getContentFromNumLinkAction.do?type=1&itemId=489 (accessed 24 May 2012).

thought the monument would serve as their marker. Each year at the remembrance service, their names would be read aloud.²³

Controversy also arose over the location of the monument. To some French Jews, France did not seem like the appropriate place. Germany, Poland, or Israel were considered better venues for a memorial. The CDJC held its ground and fought for its chosen locale. After all, France was home to the Universal Israeli Alliance and Rashi²⁴, a land of ancient Judaism, and the first modern European nation to give its Jews full equality. Schneersohn was unstoppable. To coordinate efforts he created a transnational organization, which elected Justin Godart as chairman. Winston Churchill, Eleanor Roosevelt, Albert Einstein, Chaim Weizmann, and Ben Gurion were just a few of the important members of the monument's international committee. Together they helped raise global funds to sponsor the project. In November 1952, the committee purchased a plot of land on the corner of Geoffroy-l'Asnier, in the fourth arrondissement of Paris, for one million francs.²⁵

Architects were chosen. Persitz Alexander and George Goldberg partnered to design a timeless structure, sober but not funereal. On May 17, 1953, the first stone was laid, as ministers, celebrities, ambassadors, and the public gathered for the ceremony. The ritual mimicked the traditions of World War I memorial ceremonies, now an annual custom. The area was decorated with the French Tricolore and Stars of David. The French national anthem, the Marseille, filled the air while orphans recited the Mourner's Kaddish, the Jewish memorial prayer for the dead, and placed flowers in a silver stele. The day seemed to fill the Jewish community with strength, until they were confronted with demands from Israel. The Israeli parliament was not happy that France would have the first memorial dedicated to the

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Rashi was a Medieval French Judaic scholar and author of famous commentary on the Torah.

²⁵ Entire paragraph is cited from *Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu*. Paris: Memorial de la Shoah.

Jewish victims of Nazism. Israel quickly completed a memorial of its own, Yad Vashem, and created stipulations for the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu.²⁶

According to Israel, Yad Vashem, its living memorial to the Holocaust, is the only suitable and necessary commemoration. The basic problem with the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu was its location—Paris. Israelis also resented the diversion of funds, believing that all finances should be used to support Israel's efforts. International relations soured, and those siding with the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu were distraught. Several meetings later, Yad Vashem and CDJC agreed to work together so that they could avoid competition and redundancy. Documentation and research could be shared between the two groups, but the list of the victims' names would always rest in Jerusalem at Yad Vashem. CDJC had to stop compiling its own list within one month of their agreement. Another part of their contract determined Yad Vashem would be in charge of allocating the funds to build the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu. This action dissolved the transnational committee, terminating Paris' function as the primary Holocaust remembrance center. The power was turned over to Israel.²⁷

In October of 1956, the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu was inaugurated. The ceremony drew a large crowd, and the ceremony adopted the rituals from the laying of the first stone. A wall inscribed in French and Hebrew by several key members, such as Justin Godart, protected the crypt. Due to a misunderstanding, the burial of the concentration camp ashes did not take place until February of 1957. Taken from the Jewish cemetery in Montparnasse, an urn was placed in the monument's crypt and covered with Jerusalem's soil. Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan said the Kaddish, which was followed by prayers and psalms. Leon Meiss lit the eternal flame, which finalized the work of Isaac Schneersohn.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Entire paragraph is cited from Memorial de la Shoah, "The History of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC)."

After 1956, the memorial became home to the CDJC. Annual Shoah ceremonies such as commemoration of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, the liberation of the Auschwitz camp, Hazkarah,²⁹ and the National Day of Deportation, take place on its site. In 1991, the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu was awarded the status of a historical monument. Since its inauguration, the evolution of the Shoah research center, which is one of the best in the European Union, as well as its educational activities designed for school groups, led the CDJC to propose a new phase: the creation of the Shoah Memorial.³⁰

Thanks to the support of the French state, the City of Paris, and the Regional Council of the Ile-de-France, the CDJC proposed an extension. The CDJC wanted to offer more research space in the reading rooms and to present a permanent exhibition on the history of the Shoah. They also included in their scheme a multimedia center, an auditorium, and a Wall of Names in the courtyard of the Memorial.³¹

The CDJC's requests were approved and The Memorial de la Shoah was opened to the public in January 2005, on the site of the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu. The new institution is envisioned as a link between those who were contemporaries of the Shoah and the generations who did not experience this period of history, either directly or through the mediation of their parents. As a continuation of the CDJC and the Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu, the Memorial de la Shoah acts as the next step in the transmission of the Shoah's remembrance and its lessons, which previously had been borne by the witnesses of the extermination of Jews of Europe.³² As the first collection of archives on the Holocaust, the Memorial's resource center was designed to teach, facilitate understanding, and provide opportunities to conduct primary source research, because now and forever it will always be necessary

²⁹ Hazkarah is a memorial prayer used in mourning.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Entire paragraph is cited from Memorial de la Shoah, "The History of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC)."

³² Ibid.

to construct "a rampart against oblivion, against a rekindling of hatred and contempt for man," to quote Eric de Rothschild, President of the Memorial.³³

On June 14, 2006, the Wall of the Righteous was inaugurated (Figure 1). It is located in the Allee des Justes (Figure 2), and lists the full names of the Righteous Among the Nations and the place of their deeds. Twenty-one thousand three hundred and ten names have been recognized worldwide, and 2,693 from France. The list continues to grow every year, so the Memorial has included nine blank plaques for future additions.³⁴

After the final extension in 2006, the Memorial has remained unchanged. From its beginning as the Memorial du Martyr du Juif Inconnu to its existence as the Memorial de la Shoah, the design utilized a mix of three materials: stone, metal, and glass. The exterior portion was separated into two sections: The Wall of Names and an area with a large, metal, weather-beaten sculpture. The Wall of Names, a listing of over 70,000 Jewish deportees from France, was engraved on glossy, white, concrete slabs (Figure 3). Names were arranged alphabetically, with the correlating deportation date. On the other side, separated by a wall, the cylindrical, metal sculpture's surface was covered with green patina and it was inscribed with the names of major concentration and death camps (Figure 4). Stone benches were positioned to surround the sculpture. A rough concrete wall enclosed the outdoor section, and its metal rebar supports were designed to protrude. Seven metal art pieces by Arbit Blatas depicting scenes from camp life (Figures 5 and 6) were placed along one side of the exterior wall.³⁵

The two-level crypt is entered via a staircase through the main lobby. A dark, polished stone material was chosen for the floor, which contrasts well with the rough, slate walls and concrete ceiling.

³³ Entire paragraph is cited from Memorial de la Shoah, "Presentation of the Memorial: The Shoah Memorial, an instrument of our time," *Memorial de la Shoah: Musee, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine*, Memorial de la Shoah, http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/b_content/getContentFromNumLinkAction.do?itemId=487&type=1 (accessed 24 May 2012).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations.

Art glass windows reflect against the polished floor, even through their metal bars. When descending into the lower portion of the crypt, the walls' façade resembles the wooden buildings of concentration camps (Figure 7). The watchtowers overlook the eternal burning flame, centered on the slate Star of David floor. A skylight faintly illuminates the Hebrew writing circling the eternal flame (Figure 8).³⁶

The permanent exhibit is located in the basement, inside two large rooms that are organized chronologically and interpreted in French and English. Beginning with the 1920s Jewish European population, the Memorial's first half proceeds to discuss The Life of a French Jew, Anti-Semitism in Europe, Rise of Nazism, Jews of France and Nazis, Exclusion to First Camps, Ghettos and Massacre, Planned Mass Murder in Europe, and Deportation of Jews from France. A television salon connects the two main rooms, where personal interviews are presented. Leading into the second room, the visitor is confronted with a wall-size version of Auschwitz's entrance gate and the section, The Extermination Camps Auschwitz-Birkenau. Plunder of Jews in France, German Civil Society Confronted with Crime, French Society Confronted with Persecution of Jews in France, Silence of the Nations, Surviving the Persecution, Resistance of Jews in the European Union, German Occupation in Tunisia, Persecution until the End of the War and Liberation, The Righteous, After the War, and the Memory of the Shoah, are described in detail in the second room. The final portion of the permanent exhibit is dedicated to the children of the Holocaust, *Memorial des enfants*. Illuminated walls are covered with approximately 3,000 photographs of Jewish children who were deported from France. The Museum utilized many media in the design of this exhibit. Maps, photographs, fabric, documents, televisions, music, books, drawings, post cards, currency, stamps, and other original material provide insight into the Holocaust as an experience.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

Today, the Memorial's mission is to understand the past in order to illuminate the future—to remember, explain, preserve, and transmit its research. Admission is free and the facility is open to the public. The CDJC continues to publish its catalogue and the *History of the Shoah Review*. The Memorial maintains a strong relationship with local school groups and teachers through recruitment, advertisement, fundraising, and sponsorships. The Memorial provides training sessions, mobile exhibits, and other material references for academic organizations. The Memorial is also home to several temporary exhibits, including *The Eichmann Trial* and *Cinema and the Shoah*. Activities are organized for children, such as tours and workshops. The research center allows visitors to search lists of deportees, and via appointment, users can see victims' police files. The Memorial is maintained and supported through several partnerships: Fondation pour la memoire de la Shoah, France's Department of Education, Higher Education, and Research, Regional Council of the Ile-de-France, the City of Paris, the Claims Conference, the Hanadiv Foundation, the Clore Foundation, Edmond J. Safra Foundation Center for Ethics, the Electricite de France Foundation, Sanofi Synthelabo, SNCF, and the Shoah Foundation Visual History Collection. Other businesses that support the Memorial's projects are Cartier, Devanlay, Eiffage, Groupama, Louis Dreyfus & Cie, NSM Vie, L'Oréal, and Spie.³⁸

Le Memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation

Few memorials exist in Paris, but their style is diverse and distinct. The first example reflects the angular, geometric, sharp design of its time—the 1960s. Its form is abstract and consists of glass fragments and stone. Le Memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation is located on l'Île de la Cité in the fourth arrondissement in central Paris. Overshadowed by the rear of Notre Dame Cathedral, the

³⁸ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations and Memorial de la Shoah, "Our Partners." *Memorial de la Shoah: Musee, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine*, Memorial de la Shoah, n.d. http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/b_content/getContentFromNumLinkAction.do?itemId=502&type=1 (accessed 24 May 2012).

memorial rests inside the gated Square de l'Île de France on Quai de L'Archeveche. As listed on the gate, entrance is free of charge and access is permitted every day except Mondays, without mention of available hours. The square has limited signage. Once inside the park, an informative plaque is situated at the memorial's entrance that describes the Third Reich, its establishment of concentration camps and work camps, its use of torture and medical experiments, the significance of the Nazi cloth stars, and statistics relating to Holocaust victims.³⁹

President Charles de Gaulle inaugurated the memorial on April 12, 1962 as a place of contemplation and remembrance. The architect Georges-Henri Pingusson created several symbolic design elements—narrow passages, tight staircases, spiked gates, restricted views with no sight horizon, and triangular shapes. Pingusson designed a memorial to recall the characteristics of the concentration camp world: imprisonment, oppression, the long ordeal of war, and the intent of destruction and degradation. These elements, along with its secluded location along the Seine, give a feeling of no-escape. The memorial immediately descends via a staircase composed of rough concrete walls and floors, to an asymmetrical open space. Facing the Seine River, there are seven spear-like, abstract metal art pieces adorned with triangles (Figure 9). The floor of the open space is laid with stone tiles, which lead to the underground portion of the monument. The prison-like feeling continues into the passage. Roughly dimpled concrete walls cover the corridor, with different dimple patterns on either side (Figure 10). Inside, a domed space is dimly lit by a memorial flame and centered on the metallic floor. Three separate wings break off from the hexagonal, domed room and lead to a tunneled crypt, and two disconnected, confined spaces. The enclosed crypt is adorned with triangular recesses and glistening beads. Its floor is laid with earth. The slate ceiling and walls reflect the sparkling glass fragments, symbolizing the lives of those who perished (Figure 11). Within the barred crypt lay the ashes of an unknown deportee from Natzweiler-Struthof, a concentration camp in the Alsace region of France. The

³⁹ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations.

right and left galleries' walls are engraved with poems and texts from famous French writers such as Jean Paul-Sartre, Robert Desnos, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, and Antoine de Saint-Exupery (Figure 12). The two wings have low, triangular stone ceilings with the names of concentration camps encircling the perimeter, written in a natural red color. Both galleries contain soil from different camps and ashes from the crematoriums, enclosed in triangular urns. Empty rooms within the right and left wings are gated with prison-like doors.⁴⁰

Aside from welcoming daily visitors, the memorial annually hosts the Day of Remembrance for Martyrs and Heroes of Deportation, on the last Sunday of April. The memorial is maintained by the French Government 's Ministry of Defense who aims to preserve the memory and solidarity of the Holocaust. The memorial is considered a "high place of national memory".⁴¹

Le Place des Martyrs Juifs du Velodrome d'Hiver

The second and third memorial examples were dedicated over twenty years after Le memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation. For the first time, France was acknowledging and apologizing for the Vichy regime's collaboration in the deportation of Jews. The dedications triggered an explosion of civic debates since the memorials are devoted to the events that took place at the Velodrome d'Hiver. Their existence was hardly debated but, their inauguration ceremonies were controversial, and annual disputes took place between 1992 and 1997. How should speakers address Vichy's alliance with Germany? How could they balance sensitivity with honesty? Eventually, public disagreements simmered

⁴⁰ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations and *Le memorial des martyrs de la Deportation de l'Île de la Cite*. Paris: Ministere de la defense et des anciens combattants and ONAC.

⁴¹ *Le memorial des martyrs de la Deportation de l'Île de la Cite*. Paris: Ministere de la defense et des anciens combattants and ONAC.

and direct apologies were made to recognize the responsibility of the Vichy regime and its crimes against the Jews of France.⁴²

The Velodrome d’Hiver , originally an indoor stadium, no longer remains. It was torn down and replaced by an office block belonging to the Interior Ministry. Also known as the Winter Cycling Stadium, the Velodrome was the site of the largest round up of Jews—the grande rafle on July 16 and 17, 1942. The grande rafle was organized by the Germans, but coordinated and conducted by the French Police. The French Police were responsible for the arrests of the Jews and their evacuation to the Velodrome d’Hiver. In all, 13, 152 Jews were arrested, and 8, 160 were held in the Velodrome d’Hiver for several days.⁴³ Of those arrested, 41% were women and 33% children. Police volunteers reported that the conditions were appalling—no medical care, insufficient food or water, and toilets that stopped functioning after the first day or two—which is not surprising considering the stadium was meant to hold only 2,000 people. Days later, adults and older children were sent to Auschwitz, while the younger children were sent orphaned and unsupervised to French internment camps. By August, approximately 3,500 Jewish children were sent to Auschwitz. None survived. The memorials stand today to commemorate these innocent victims.⁴⁴

The second major memorial in Paris was inaugurated in 1986 and has a very basic design. The third major memorial was inaugurated in 1994 and is figurative. As a two-part representation, the memorials do complement each other, although their layout appears uncalculated. The space is scattered. The first part of the monumental ensemble is a memorial garden on Boulevard de Grenelle, and the second is a sculpture near Quai de Grenelle and the Seine River. The garden rests on the

⁴² Entire paragraph is cited from Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél' D'Hiv' in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (New York: Berghahn, 2005), 52-60.

⁴³ The Jews who were not held in the stadium were deported directly to the camps.

⁴⁴ Entire paragraph is cited from Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France*, Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), 38-42 and Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe*, 19-20.

Velodrome d'Hiver's historic site, just outside Bir Hakeim metro station, line six (Figures 13 and 14). Dedicated in 1986 by French President Jacques Chirac, it is an enclosed, stone wall with a stele protruding from its center, remembering the plot's history, its victims, and the responsibility of the Vichy government, as evoked via Chirac's text. Flowerbeds and other vegetation surround the steps leading to the stele. A street sign was also unveiled at the 1986 ceremony, and it names the nearby square, "The Square of Jewish Martyrs."⁴⁵

In 1994, a bronze sculpture designed by Walter Spitzer, artist and former deportee, was erected in the dock's park (Figures 15 and 16). A commission, composed of members of survivors' organizations, Ministry of Veteran Affairs, and the Ministry of Culture, reviewed the design competition. Eventually, the group worked with Spitzer to select an appropriate scheme. The sculpture, a seated group of seven people, slightly smaller than life size, is depicted with their suitcases as they await the deportation of 1942. The group rests on a slanted, curved concrete platform, symbolizing the cycle tracks from the stadium. Below them, an inscription acknowledges the French State's responsibility: "The French Republic pays homage to the victims of racist and anti-Semitic persecutions and crimes against humanity committed under the de facto authority called the 'government of the French State' 1940-1944".⁴⁶ The garden, street sign, and sculpture form a constellation of small, uncoordinated memorials. Nonetheless, as an assemblage, the memorials remind us of a single past event and continue to be used as the backdrop for annual national commemorations.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Weidmer, *The Claims of Memory*, 38-56.

⁴⁶ Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures*, 54.

⁴⁷ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations and Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures*, 52-55.

Agudath Hakehilot Synagogue

The French architect Hector Guimard designed the Agudath Hakehilot Synagogue on 10 Rue Pavée in Le Marais. Hector Guimard, who created the famous metro entrances in central Paris, is one of the best representatives of French Art Nouveau. The Art Nouveau synagogue was designed in 1913 to resemble an opened Torah scroll, unique to Paris and the designer. Agudath Hakehilot served the Russian-Polish Orthodox residents of Le Marais until its destruction on Yom Kippur in 1940, when the synagogue was bombed and destroyed by Nazis, along with several other Jewish worship centers in Paris. After the war, Agudath Hakehilot was restored and has served as a national monument since 1989 (Figures 17 and 18). Orthodox services are still held, and it is the largest synagogue in the Pletzl.⁴⁸

Musee d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme

The Musee d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme is located in Le Marais along Rue du Temple, north of the Pletzl.⁴⁹ The museum is situated in a historic three-winged mansion, designed by Pierre le Muet and built in 1650 (Figure 19). The building functioned solely as a residence until the nineteenth century, when it was divided into commercial properties, leaving the third floor as the only remaining living quarters. In the late nineteenth century several Jewish families moved into the building and resided there until their deportation in 1942. In 1962, the mansion was acquired by the City of Paris, and in 1986, it was designated as a museum for Jewish civilization. Restoration efforts began in 1978 and continued in 1991, however the building maintains its original exterior architectural style. In 1992, interior renovation began and was directed by architects Catherine Bizouard, François Pin, and Loan Mai. The three wings were redesigned to house the reception area, bookshop, tearoom, permanent

⁴⁸ Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe*, 17.

⁴⁹ "Pletzl" is Yiddish for square.

collections, temporary exhibitions, auditorium, media library, administrative offices, and children's workshop. The main interior architecture concept is the contrast between the original, historic space and the contemporary intervention.⁵⁰ Captain Dreyfus's⁵¹ statue is situated in the center of the courtyard, reminding viewers of his past persecution.

Before entering the permanent exhibit, visitors encounter a display dedicated to the Jewish Parisian experience of 1939 with a brief explanation on the Holocaust in France. Overall, however, the museum serves as a memorial to Jewish life before its destruction, and the remnants that remained after the war. The permanent exhibit is arranged into ten distinct sections—Medieval presence, Renaissance and its influence, Hanukkah traditions, Passover traditions, architectural chronology of synagogues, prayer relics, The Dreyfus Affair, twentieth century art, creation of Israel, and a rotating modern art space that temporarily housed Carole Benzaken's work. The collections are comprised of numerous objects, such as Torahs, jewelry, and artwork by Christian Boltanski. Documents, like historic newspapers, and textiles, like traditional Moroccan dresses, are enclosed in display cases. Musee d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme mixes history with rituals and specific locations to illustrate the Jewish experience through an array of objects.⁵²

The museum offers many educational programs and resources, traveling exhibits, and the ability to rent museum space. The media library allows guests to search books, videos, and photographs. The auditorium hosts lectures and panel discussions, and stores the archival material. Guided tours are

⁵⁰ Entire paragraph is cited from Musee D'art Et D'histoire Du Judaïsme, "History of the Museum : Key Dates," *Musee D'art Et D'histoire Du Judaïsme*, Musee D'art Et D'histoire Du Judaïsme. http://www.mahj.org/en/1_musee/historique.php?niv=3 (accessed 08 June 2012).

⁵¹ Captain Dreyfus refers to Alfred Dreyfus of the Dreyfus Affair discussed on page 1 note 1.

⁵² Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations.

prepared for adults and school groups. Through its various activities, the museum maintains close ties with the community of Paris and attempts to keep its Jewish heritage alive.⁵³

Plaques

Plaques serve as the most common form of Holocaust memorialization in Paris, mounted on diverse buildings—educational, religious, residential, and commercial. Hung inside the walls and outside the façade of public schools, these plaques commemorate the many Jewish children who perished in the Shoah. An infamous example is located in Le Marais along 8 Rue des Hospitalieres-St-Gervias, where 165 pupils were deported from their Jewish school (Figures 20 and 21). The plaque commemorates the students and their director, Joseph Migneret, who reportedly attempted to save the children, before his own exile. Another example is situated near the Memorial de la Shoah, at College Francois Couperin, 2 Allee des Justes (Figure 22). Two plaques face the memorial and are dedicated to the children who were deported to Auschwitz. At 16 rue Laugier, L'école Primaire Publique Laugier inaugurated a plaque on November 29, 2003. This plaque is also dedicated to the French children who were murdered at Auschwitz, with specific mention of the 80 children who resided in that area, the seventeenth arrondissement.⁵⁴

Synagogues commonly display plaques dedicated to rabbis or congregants who lost their lives to the Nazis. Located in Le Marais at 14 Place des Vosges, Synagogue Place des Vosges serves a conservative, Sephardic population. Inside, a plaque is dedicated to one of the rabbis who led the synagogue while it functioned as an Ashkenazi establishment. Aside from its own plaques, Synagogue Place des Vosges has sponsored plaques in residential locations as well. On April 29, 2007, a plaque was

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

installed on the exterior of 10 and 12 rue des Deux-Ponts, whose fourteen inhabitants were exterminated in the death camps. Synagogue Place des Vosges also hosted a temporary exhibit on deported Jewish children. Names, photographs, and data were listed per city, such as Paris and Marseilles.⁵⁵

Plaques line the streets in residential neighborhoods. Along Rue des Rosiers in Le Marais, nameplates honor several deceased residents. Louis Chapiro, born in Paris on March 28, 1913 and shot by the Germans on April 30, 1944, is commemorated outside his home on Rue des Rosiers (Figure 23). A school director who lived and worked on Rue des Rosiers, and who remains un-named, is memorialized near 10 Rue des Rosiers (Figure 24). At 16 Rue des Rosiers, Paulette Wajncwaig, is commemorated as the youngest victim recorded.⁵⁶ At 8 Place de la Republique, a plaque outside its main entrance is dedicated to the residents who were deported between 1942 and 1944.⁵⁷

A unique example adorns the exterior of Hotel Lutetia, in the sixth arrondissement on the corner of Boulevard Raspail and Rue des Sevres. After World War II, Hotel Lutetia accommodated displaced concentration camp refugees, and was a reception center for families to attempt to locate lost loved ones. The inscription acknowledges that the joy of the families who found relatives at Hotel Lutetia cannot erase the pain and anguish that was felt by millions of families in despair. The plaque was placed on the façade in May 1985, the fortieth anniversary of the camps' liberations (Figures 25 and 26).⁵⁸

Another plaque located in a commercial location, is fixed to the interior wall of Hotel de Ville's metro line 1 exit on Rue de Rivoli's entrance (Figure 27). This example is dedicated to the 3,000

⁵⁵ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations and Place des Vosges Synagogue, "Commemoration," *Synadesvosges*, Place des Vosges Synagogue, 24 Apr 2007 http://david.goldstein.free.fr/photos_shule/24-04-2007-Commemoration/index.htm (accessed 23 May 2012).

⁵⁶ Winstone, *The Historical Sites of Europe: An Historical Guide*, 17.

⁵⁷ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations, unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁸ Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations.

employees of the City of Paris who rebelled against the Nazis on August 16, 1944. The officers went on strike between the Saint Paul metro stop and Hotel de Ville metro stop, and refused to assist the Germans. The plaque was hung on the fiftieth anniversary of this event, and the employees of the RATP⁵⁹ honor the unknown, courageous employees who lost their lives.⁶⁰

Poster Displays

Posters titled “Metro Memoire: Histories de Metro” were created by a consortium of several organizations, including the Foundation pour la Memoire de la Shoah. Various topics are represented on these posters and they are hung throughout Parisian metro stations. They resemble creative art collages, incorporating historic newspaper clippings. On line 4 at Reaumur Sebastopol, three separate posters describe events between 1912 and 1949 (Figures 28 and 29). Articles include information on the Tour de France, Munich in 1938, the alliance with Great Britain during World War II, the war with Germany during World War II, the Conseil des Ministres over diplomatic situations and military, and the war in North Africa. On line 6 at Bir Hakeim, two separate sets of memorabilia are hung. One poster is dedicated to the Battle of Bir Hakeim of 1942, which took place in Libya. It discusses the history of German troops in Africa and their battle against the First Free French Brigade. The second poster memorializes the roundup of the French Jews in 1942, and their placement in the Velodrome d’Hiver (Figure 30). Interestingly, the stadium was located on the same boulevard as this station.⁶¹

⁵⁹ “RATP” (Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens) refers to Paris’ transport authority.

⁶⁰ Entire paragraph is cited from the author’s observations.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Le Marais

Le Marais has maintained its rich, Jewish culture despite its dark history. Survivors have replanted their roots alongside their North African neighbors, whose population soared after The French Revolution of 1794 and again following World War II. The result is a mixing of the Ashkenazi and Sephardic traditions, diversifying Paris' previous Jewish heritage. Le Marais is one of the few places where one can hear Yiddish spoken on its streets while enjoying its many falafel stands. The Pletzl is the heart of the community, grouping streets like Rue des Rosiers and Rue des Ecouffles together. Traditional Jewish enterprises crowd the area: restaurants, bakeries, butchers, prayer houses, Judaica shops, bookstores, and delis. Rue des Ecouffles remains as it was before World War II; its preservation is a priority. Its synagogues still function today, and the Sabbath is strictly abided. The neighborhood's conservation serves as one of the most effective forms of Parisian commemoration, fulfilling the Jewish way of morning. Today, as a local baker rolls challah dough, the life and work of deceased bakers, is carried on. Le Marais continues to flourish and serves the community as a living memorial to its past inhabitants.⁶²

Analysis and Conclusion

The evolution of Parisian Holocaust commemoration demonstrates surprising diversity and change over time. Beginning with paper monuments, experiences of the Holocaust were portrayed in published materials, all of which were shared and discussed predominately within private settings. Later, survivor groups wanted visual representations. Plaque memorials, synagogue restoration, and the renewal of the Jewish community began soon after the war ended and continues today. In the 1950s

⁶² Entire paragraph is cited from the author's observations and Winstone, *The Holocaust Sites of Europe: An Historical Guide*, 17-18.

and 1960s structural memorials were created, located on private property or discrete public spaces. They provided ideal locations for annual remembrance services. Victims of the Holocaust were given symbolic graves, complete with headstones, through the erection of these stone markers. During the 1980s and 1990s committees built monuments in civic arenas. As a subject, the Holocaust was now showcased publicly. The French government was willing to admit its complicity and apologize. An increasing number of plaques and posters appeared. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, commemoration shifted towards museum-styled memorials, promoting an educational component. The Memorial de la Shoah asks: "Why and how should the Shoah be taught in the twenty-first century? Such issues are at the heart of the Memorial's mission, at the heart of the work of the historians, researchers and educators who come together here to be a source of inspiration open to all, ready to welcome the new generations."⁶³ Holocaust memorialization is ready for its next transition.

When the memorials were initially inaugurated, visitors were impressed, but now the styles have lost power. Le Marais's environment is conducive to remembrance, including two elite museums dedicated to the Holocaust and Jewish culture, a strong, proud Jewish community that maintains its ethnic and religious roots, original architecture housing authentic enterprises, and consistent, visible memorials. However, the district has an exclusive group of patrons. Outside Le Marais, Le Memorial des Martyrs de la Deportation is an impressive example of 1960s remembrance. The memorials at Le Place des Martyrs Juifs du Velodrome d'Hiver symbolize an important transition for French commemoration. Yet, these two commemorative sites outside of Le Marais are practically invisible to visitors. Neither have effective signage, and both are overlooked by two of Paris' biggest tourist attractions—Notre Dame Cathedral and the Eiffel Tower. For the passer-by who does stumble upon the Velodrome d'Hiver's memorials, he or she is given the impression that the structures are by-products of political

⁶³ Entire paragraph is cited from Memorial de la Shoah, "The History of the Center of Contemporary Jewish Documentation (CDJC)," *Memorial de la Shoah: Musee, Centre de documentation juive contemporaine*. Memorial de la Shoah, http://www.memorialdelashoah.org/b_content/getContentFromNumLinkAction.do?type=1&itemId=489 (accessed 24 May 2012).

attempts to ritually commemorate historic dates, rather than organized plans to memorialize the Holocaust. As a whole, while Paris' memorials may have suited their audiences in the past, today, their effectiveness is questioned.

Furthermore, in light of the school shooting in Toulouse, France; Jewish communities will consider new ways to "create structures that dramatize the tragedy of the Holocaust and provide opportunities for contemporaries, now so far removed from the original scene, powerfully, to re-experience it. ...In each Holocaust museum the fate of the Jews functions as a metaphorical bridge to the treatment of other ethnic, religious, and racial minorities. The aim is manifestly not to promote the Holocaust as an important event in earlier historical time, but to contribute to the possibilities of pluralism and justice in the world today."⁶⁴ In Toulouse, Mohammed Merah, a twenty-three year old French citizen of Algerian descent, told police that he wanted to avenge Palestinian children, and attack the French army because of its foreign interferences.⁶⁵ Merah shot three children and a teacher outside of their Jewish school, Ozar Hatorah. The shooter was later linked with Al-Qaeda, and the murders of three French soldiers. The assault was considered the most severe attack on French Jews since 1982, when six people were murdered and twenty-two injured in a Parisian restaurant.⁶⁶ A plaque hangs outside this restaurant on Rue des Rosiers in le Marais, more often than not, going unnoticed (Figure 31).⁶⁷

Events like the one in Toulouse, modern-day genocide, and the existence of Holocaust deniers, lead researchers to question society's dependence on memorial structures. Viewers are "under the illusion that our memorial edifices will always be there to remind us, we take leave of them and return

⁶⁴ Janet Jacobs, *Memorializing the Holocaust: Gender, Genocide and Collective Memory*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), xvi.

⁶⁵ "Shootings in Toulouse and Montauban: What We Know," *BBC News*, BBC, 22 Mar. 2012, accessed 11 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17428860>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Author's observation.

only at our convenience. To the extent that we encourage monuments to do our memory-work for us, we become that much more forgetful.”⁶⁸ The built environment will not be enough to sustain the memory of the Holocaust. Plaques, posters, monuments, and museums are meaningless without personalized, didactic information, experience-based environments, and a place where questions may be answered and explored.⁶⁹ Investigating ways to awaken historical awareness through symbolic components, alongside educational programs and historiography, is the next order of business for Holocaust commemoration. The union of tangible and intangible memorials will allow the memory of the Shoah to live on, while it combats modern day Anti-Semitism and genocide.

⁶⁸ James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993), 5.

⁶⁹ An excellent example of this is Berlin’s German Democratic Republic museum (DDR Museum).

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Photography by author



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Photography by author



Figure 6: Arbit Blatas' artwork
Photograph by author



Figure 7: wooden watchtower
Photograph by author



Figure 8: Memorial du Martyr Juif Inconnu
Photography by author



Figure 9: Le Memorial des
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Photograph by Ministre de la defense
et des anciens combattants and ONAC



Figure 10: Le Memorial des Martyrs de la
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Photograph by Ministre de la defense et des
anciens combattants and ONAC

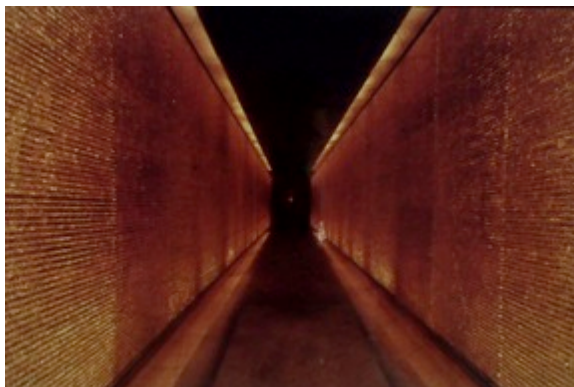


Figure 11: Le Memorial des
Martyrs de la Deportation
Photograph by Ministre de la defense
et des anciens combattants and ONAC

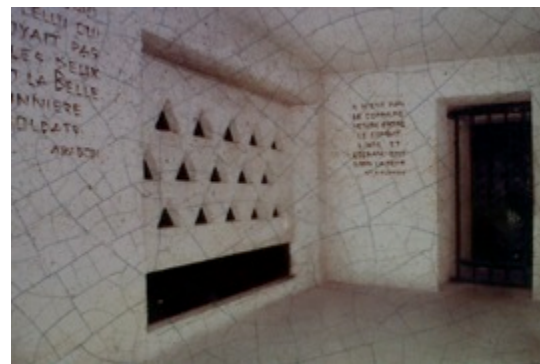


Figure 12: Le Memorial des Martyrs de la
Deportation
Photograph by Ministre de la defense et des
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Figure 13: memorial garden
Photograph by author



Figure 14: memorial garden
Photograph by author



Figure 15: bronze sculpture
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Figure 16: bronze sculpture
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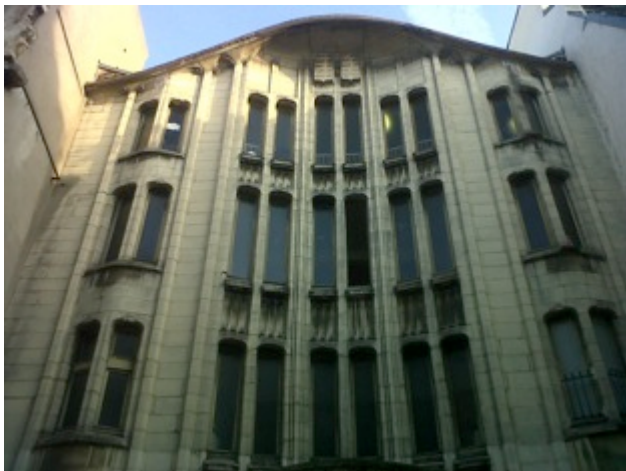


Figure 17: Agudath Hakehilot Synagogue
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Figure 29: Line 4 Reaumur Sebastopol
Photograph by author



Figure 30: Line 6 Bir Hakeim
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Figure 31: 1982 attack
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