

01 On the Road to Success: The Documentation Center 2001 - 2015

Position in the German Memorial Landscape

Since the Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds was opened in 2001, it has been unique among German memorials. In contrast to the memorials connected with former concentration camps or prisons, this institution looks at the Nazi regime itself, which, here more than anywhere else, attempted to win over the entire German people by means of gigantic construction projects and staged events.

Development of Visitor Numbers

Based on the experience of a previous smaller exhibition in the Zeppelin Grandstand, the Documentation Center was expected to attract about 100,000 visitors per year. After the "run" during the first year (230,000), annual visitor numbers levelled off at 165,000 in 2003 and 2004. Since 2005, the centre has seen a steady increase in visitors. On 23 July, 2012, the two millionth visitor was welcomed. In **2015**, for the first time, annual visitor numbers reached **250,000**. About 50 per cent of these visitors come from abroad, including many tourists from the English-speaking world visiting Nuremberg on a river cruise.

Number of Groups Catered For

The annual number of school classes and other groups (police, German army, adult education courses) taking advantage of the Study Forum's educational programmes has increased from 960 (in 2002) to over 1350. In summer 2013, the educational programme was modified and extended, on the basis of experience in the first eleven years, and taking into account the new principles of "historical-political education with a sharpened profile".

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Exhibitions

The Documentation Center continually develops the topics addressed in the permanent exhibition "Fascination & Terror", with lectures, symposiums and temporary exhibitions. Some exhibitions were created by outside institutions, some were in-house productions. The two exhibitions organised by the Documentation Center – "Seduced, abused, and sacrificed: the short life of Nuremberg Hitler Youth Member Paul B." and "Racial Mania – The Nuremberg Laws of 1935" – proved to be very successful. The first exhibition toured to numerous German cities, and French and English versions went to France and the USA. The exhibition "Racial Mania" also went to France, and in 2009, a Polish version was shown in the Auschwitz Memorial.

The first major exhibition organised by the Documentation Center opened in April 2008 – "Burden of Images – Franconia during National Socialism". It presented a wealth of images in an unusual way, literally as a panorama of the state of mind of an entire region.

Between May and October 2010, as a contribution to the railway jubilee year 2010 – 175 years of railway in Germany – the Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds – in co-operation with six Polish memorial sites – presented the exhibition "The Track. The Logistics of Racial Mania". It was grouped around a central installation, "The Track", serving as an artistic and multi-layered metaphor. This was the Documentation Center's largest and so far most successful special exhibition, and was visited by just under 50,000 people.

In 2012, in close co-operation between the Documentation Center and relevant experts as well as historians from the region, the special exhibition "Robbed of Rights. Robbed of Dignity. Robbed. Aryanisation in Nuremberg and Fürth" was prepared, with particular reference to the current state of research. It followed on from Documentation Center projects investigating the history of Franconia in National Socialism.

The special exhibition in 2013 "WortGewalt. Vom rechten Lesestoff" [Violence of Words. Right-wing Reading Matter] using books from the Documentation Center's own collection, was reason for the Documentation Center to continue looking at unanswered questions concerning the mentality of the "Third Reich" and types of similar mentalities in its various successors, and to find answers to these questions, following the centre's brief of educational and explanatory work.

In the memorial year 2014, the Documentation Center commemorated the events of World War I and its repercussions until the present day, with a unique multi-media installation using panoramic projections: "Summer Fourteen. The Birth of the Horror of Modern Times".



In 2015, the exhibition “The Grounds” looked at the history of the grounds since 1945. A scaffold cube with suspended objects illustrated numerous facets of the former Party Rally Grounds and made an up-to-date contribution to the debate about their future development. This is a consistent continuation of the Documentation Center’s policy to experiment with innovative forms of presentation in its special exhibitions.

Awards

In 2000, the City of Nuremberg was honoured with the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Education 2000. The city's efforts in establishing the Documentation Center on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds were explicitly recognised by the award.

In 2002, the Documentation Center was awarded the Silver Otter by the British Guild of Travel Writers, as best non-British museum. After 24 years, this was the first time the annual award had been given to a German institution.

Co-operations

There is increasing co-operation between the staff of European memorials and documentation centres both nationally and internationally. The Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds has established contact – with co-operation and several exchanges of temporary exhibitions – with the Center de la Mémoire Oradour and the Panstwowe Muzeum Auschwitz, as well as with the information centres in Vogelsang and Prora, to name but a few.

Area Information System

With its permanent exhibition "Fascination & Terror", the Documentation Center provides a key to understanding the surrounding former Nazi Party Rally Grounds. In order to give all those entering the freely accessible grounds an opportunity to get an idea of their topography and historical context, an area information system was installed in 2006. 23 panels, located in prominent positions all over the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, give information about the function of this particular location in words (English/German) and images.

Tasks for the Future: Building Extension and Concept for an “Experience Space”

With annual visitor numbers of 250,000, the Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds has reached the limits of its capacity. Currently plans are being designed for an extension of the museum, and funding is being sought. The extension, which is planned for 2021, in addition to providing new functional spaces (offices, an event room for over 200 people, space for a collection and the library) will provide a learning lab and allow the relaunch of the permanent exhibition which by then will be twenty years old. The learning lab will give new impetus to future educational work,



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providing media and exhibits for further information, aimed at a range of target groups. The revision of the permanent exhibition will offer the opportunity to introduce new topics, reflecting the current state of research, such as today's culture of remembrance, and to promote the interlinking of content with various parts of the grounds.

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In addition to this work, the Documentation Center's team is developing plans for an "Experience Space Party Rally Grounds", extending the existing information to the outdoor areas, after the buildings on Zeppelin Field and The Zeppelin Grandstand have been made structurally safe. Orientation on the grounds is to be improved, and areas which have so far not been accessible will be opened to the public. Using various media and opening up visual axes, this extension will give visitors an impression of the spatial impact of the mass stage productions of former times. Events held in the hall of the Zeppelin Grandstand will complement the new programmes offered.

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