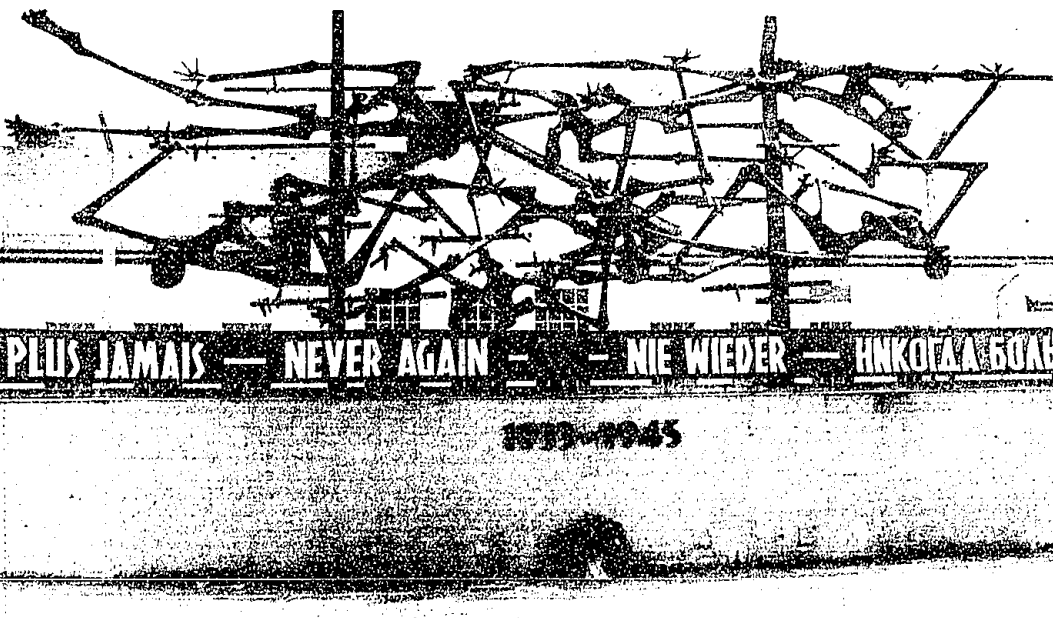




'Just not enough': A memorial sculpture at Dachau is not enough to honor the millions who perished in the Nazi camps, says Farmington Hills resident Fred Newman, who snapped the photo recently.

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look at a painful part of their country's history.

"It was unimaginable to think how these people, the survivors, have lived through all this," Newman said. "And it was appalling, how little the country that was responsible took part in these ceremonies."

In contrast to the brutal images of piles of starved victims, crematoria and other stark reminders of why Dachau, Bergen-Belsen and other camps came to be, a few simple signs, such as one in German saying "1,000 dead lie here," and sanitized buildings that would not betray their horrible past, were all that was left.

"There was a housing project built right up to the camp," he said.

Although some German dignitaries appeared at some of the ceremonies Newman attended, few of them spoke, leaving that to the survivors.

One German who did speak at the April 27 ceremony at Bergen-Belsen, Dr. Rolf Wernstedt, related a sense of the importance to his country's past of the Holocaust.

"The battle for the future takes place through the understanding of the past," Wernstedt said in ceremonies. "The Germans also had to be liberated from a dictatorship for which

they were responsible."

The ceremonies at the 12 German concentration camps where millions of Jews and others were killed during World War II began April 9 and ended May 5. Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück and Dachau were among the more famous and infamous camps that allied troops liberated in 1945.

"I don't think people there really want to hear about it," said Newman, who lives with his wife Marsha and two children in Farmington Hills. "At Bergen-Belsen there were just mounds where bodies had been buried. There was nothing to show what had really happened there."

That is in stark contrast to some camps outside of Germany, including Auschwitz, in Poland. That camp, with its famous entrance as shown in the film "Schindler's List," was kept much the same as it appeared when Russian forces liberated it.

Rabbi Charles Rosenzweig of the Holocaust Memorial Center said Newman's concern over attitudes about the Holocaust are justified.

The center, which is the first of its kind in the United States, attracts school groups from the area, state and Midwest, as well as visitors from around the world. In addition to displays and programs about the Holocaust, it is a repository of the events, of the history of European Jews and of the history of Judeo-Christian thought and theology, he said.

Newman sees the bitter lessons of the Holocaust as something unique to human history. Although modern atrocities in far flung regions of the globe like Cambodia and Rwanda have been called the modern equivalents of the Holocaust, there is an important difference.

"The murder of Jews (during World War II) was an industrial,

mechanical process," he said. "Even hair was used for making clothing. There were no restraints on what the German people could do to Jews."

And with the many photos, accounts and testimony of not only the survivors, but of the allied soldiers who saw what was left in 1945 of the human remnants of 1,000 years of European Jewish history, the campaigns to discredit the Holocaust as a hoax is another example of denial, Newman said.

"These reports in newspapers that the Germans are facing their past ring hollow," Newman said.

"It is a hard thing for any human being to face," he said. "It is something that is hard for Jews to face. A German general who was hanged at the end of the war said he thought that it would take Germany 1,000 years to recover from what it had done."



Nightmare scene: Fred Newman says he occasionally has nightmares of this German military photograph of a woman and her child about to be shot near her already-dug grave.



Grim reminder: Photograph, provided by Fred Newman, show children in World War II concentration camp.

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