

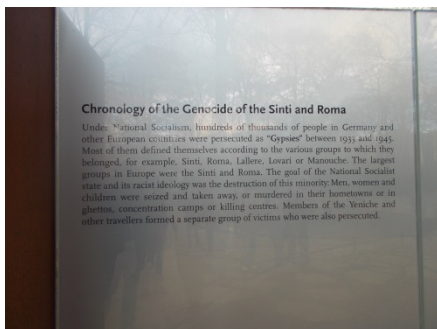
15/04/15 – Trip to Berlin (Virginia Mwangi)

During the Easter holiday break, I was able to visit the following attractions while in Berlin.

- The Reichstag building
- The Jüdisches Museum Berlin
- Brandenburg gate
- Berlin wall
- Potsdamer Platz
- Alexander Platz
- Berlin Cathedral
- Fernsehturm
- Berlin Victory column
- Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church

I learnt a lot during my short stay in Berlin and will mention a few things that stood out to me and that I was able to learn about.

The Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe and the Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe. I learnt that not just the Jews were persecuted but also the Sinti and Roma. The Nazi dictatorship inflicted a great injustice on them as they were persecuted on reasons of race. The well with a central retractable stone is however very beautiful.



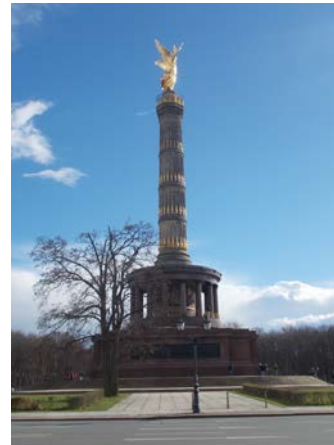
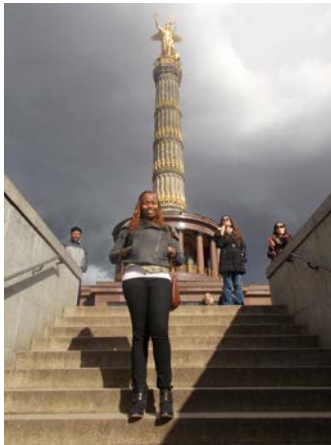
The Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. This church caught my eye while still on the bus due to its grand nature and destroyed roofing. I found out that the Church is a memorial to peace and reconciliation and the futility of war. Architecturally the old church and new church also contrast modernism and history.

The Reichstag



The Brandenburg gate. This is now a symbol of unity after the Berlin wall fell in 1989, uniting the East and the West Germany. The four horsed Chariot at the top driven by Queen Victoria (the winged goddess of victory) is also very cool.

The Victory Column. This was erected as a memorial to the Prussian Victories over Denmark, Austria and France. I discovered that it was originally designed for the square facing the Reichstag, but was moved to Großer Stern under Hitler's rule in 1938 as part of their refurbishment plans for the new world capital, Germania. This relocation saved the monument as its old location became the target of several heavy air-raids and even heavier combat towards the end of the war.



Potsdamer platz. This is an excellent example of urban renewal as it transformed the dormant wasteland where the Berlin wall stood, separating East and West Berlin.

The Jüdisches Museum Berlin. I visited this particular museum due to architectural interest. When there, I began to understand the repercussions of the Holocaust as interpreted by Daniel Libeskind. His representation of history and the experience in form of a building is quite spectacular. One path led to the Holocaust tower which is stark and intimidating. The other led to the garden of Exile and emigration which is used as a memorial to those who were forced to leave Berlin. The pillars in the garden are set up on a sloping base plane to disorient the visitor to the museum giving a glimpse of what the Jews must have experienced.

