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Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II

Andrew M. Shanken

One month after atomic bombs annihilated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Philip Johnson proposed a memorial for World War II. In "War Memorials: What Aesthetic Price Glory?" Johnson critically reviewed the range of possibilities, only to settle on a massive mound of dirt.¹ "The mound," he wrote, "offers a unique opportunity for that most American of modern tools, the bulldozer, which could build mounds many times the size of the prehistoric ones in considerably less time. . . ."² At first glance, Johnson's proposal appears to be an early ironic submission in the postwar debate over how to memorialize World War II. In reality, the mound of dirt capped a long and wide-ranging wartime debate over memorials that for two years had filled the pages of art and architecture magazines, the popular press, trade, and even scholarly journals. The strange wartime debate revived a similar one waged at the end of World War I. On one side stood those who advocated traditional forms of memorials such as statues, obelisks, triumphal arches, and other commemorative structures, those forms of memorials whose sole purpose is to serve as a memorial. On the other side of the debate stood those who supported "living memorials," useful projects such as community centers, libraries, forests, and even highways that were marked in some fashion, usually with plaques, as memorials.

Proponents of traditional memorials overwhelmingly lost this debate. While some living memorial advocates fluidly incorporated traditional memorial strategies, many starkly polarized the difference between traditional and living memorials, couching it in terms of national identity. Choosing a form of memorial was tantamount to choosing a form of society. Critics condemned traditional memorials as "tawdry 'monumental' monstrosities."³ Building a victory column or a triumphal arch was anathema at a moment when many Americans experienced a compelling drive to move on and to forget war and the society that had fought two of them in quick succession. To its sponsors, living memorials presented a way out of this dilemma, a means of folding the sacrifices of war into the pattern of democratic community life, gently kneading the past into the present, in the process altering the relation between public space and memory. By the end of the war, living memorial advocates could claim a rhetorical victory, having routed their opponents, if only in pure word volume. The results of the immediate postwar years reinforce the rhetorical victory. Most communities favored living memorials. The preponderance of traditional memorials that did get built were additive, quietly appended to preexisting memorial sites. In many cases names were simply added to earlier memorials. While the rhetoric of the debate set the two forms of commemoration in opposition, in reality the two strategies commingled after the war. Rather than supplanting conventional memorials, living memorials complicated memorialization.⁴

In spite of its importance, since World War II the living memorial remains a scholarly lacuna.⁵ The terms and the significance of the World War II debate over memorials are little understood, and yet they are of great consequence to the present moment. As the recent acrimony over the National Memorial to World War II in Washington, D.C., makes evident, Americans have a memorial problem, a typological quandary that points to a deep discomfort with memorials and memorial practices as they have developed since World War II. This essay explores the roots of this discomfort through an analysis of the wartime debate on memorials, in particular, the rhetoric of living memorial advocates. Living memorials offered a positive alternative to traditional memorials, in which memorial practice was blended with civic projects in a search for an almost mythic sense of lost community. Rhetorically, the term *living memorial* resonated with Depression-era and wartime slogans, such as "better living" and what Warren Susman identified as the "American Way of Life," converting both the spirit of New Deal projects and the mobilizations of the home front into a way of life after the war.⁶ As a set of civic projects, the living memorial also intersected with the concurrent intensification of interest in urban planning during World War II. On the other hand, living memorial advocates also offered a critique of traditional memorials. While their criticism at times merely acknowledged the obsolescence of earlier memorials, at other times it was devastating, casting traditional memorials as indulgent and vulgar, as impediments to planning better cities, as the "white elephants" of an unusable past, and as unwanted reminders of death. These associations undermined the authority of traditional memorials after World War II, interjecting a set of concerns that continue to influence the expectations of memorialization today. As such, this debate marks a turning point in strategies of memorialization.

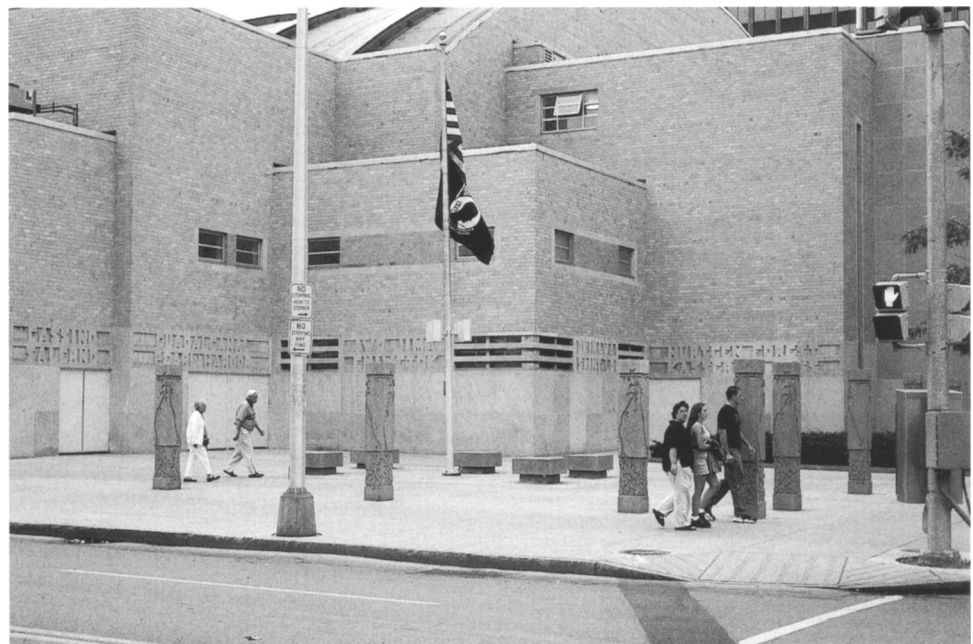
Framing the Debate

Many living memorials did not depart radically from traditional strategies of memorialization, in contradiction to much of the wartime polemic. The most sensitive of those proposed during the war or built afterward added plaques, flagpoles, memorial seats, or sculptural elements to living memorials in order to communicate their memorial status unequivocally. For instance, the committee that built the Onondaga County War Memorial in Syracuse, New York (1951), for which planning began as early as November 1944, boasted that it was the "finest multi-purpose auditorium in the United States" (Fig. 1).⁷ In addition to a 9,000-seat auditorium, 50,000 square feet of exhibition space, and nine permanent meeting rooms, the largest of which held six hundred people, the building displayed its memorial status in a number of ways. The 1,200-foot-long promenades surrounding the auditorium in a horseshoe shape on two floors

1 Onondaga County War Memorial, Syracuse, N.Y., 1951 (photo: author)



2 Onondaga County War Memorial (photo: author)



are inscribed with the names of fifty thousand Onondaga County veterans of both world wars and the Spanish-American War. While using the hallway as a memorial wall, instead of creating a specifically devotional area, might be seen as an impious or overly practical use of incidental space, in practice this strategy separates those parts of the building that are explicitly *not* memorial spaces from the memorial wall. In addition, the building contains a “Memorial Hall,” a specifically devotional space where the names of those who died in the two world wars and the “Korean conflict” are inscribed on bronze tablets, and two murals, by Syracuse artist G. Lee Trimm, allegorize the two world wars. Moreover, the building’s exterior, deeply incised with the names of battles, reads as a memorial wall. The loose narrative of American military

history spills out onto the sidewalk, taking over benches, paving stones, and rough stone sculptures that may be seen as squared-off abstractions of the boulders many American towns set aside as memorials (Fig. 2). The Onondaga County War Memorial muddies commemoration with utility but does not obscure it.

The idea of living memorials, of which the Syracuse memorial is one culmination, emerged from World War I. The first serious and sustained critique of traditional memorials erupted after November 1918.⁸ The doughboys, shafts, and sepulchral memorials that dominated the American memorial landscape were lambasted for their clutter, sense of age and decay, vulgarity and expense, and superfluosity and ineffectiveness, among other things.⁹ “It is now generally

conceded," one World War I critic wrote, "that mere shafts of granite and statues of bronze, be they ever so artistic, are inadequate to express the tribute we would pay to our soldiers of democracy."¹⁰ Citing the "unsightly relics of former wars" and the "tidal wave of cemetery monuments," the author claimed that traditional memorials "can seldom be artistic or inspirational."¹¹ Instead, she favored "Liberty Buildings," community centers modeled on the wartime buildings set up near military bases to encourage interaction between soldiers and civilians. Many critics believed that the living memorial would carry the communal spirit of the home front into peacetime.¹² Certainly, traditional memorials have often been built with the intention of preserving social ideals for future generations, but living memorials elaborated this memorial function, making it the primary purpose of the memorial. In the process, living memorial advocates denied the possibility that traditional memorials performed "memory work" for the living. While the call for useful memorials in the United States probably dates back to Reconstruction after the Civil War, or even earlier, during World War I advocates of living memorials believed that they were inventing a new form of memorial.¹³

By World War II, criticism of the traditional memorial was rampant, and the call for living memorials coalesced into a powerful movement that posed serious challenges to the traditional memorial. It undermined a long-standing iconography and shifted the terms of memorial practice away from what might be thought of as a liturgically based set of rituals, drawing memorialization closer to leisure, recreation, and the desire for cohesive community. With the exception of the Marine Corps War Memorial (commonly called the Iwo Jima Memorial) in Washington, D.C., few memorials built in the years after World War II are figurative or iconic.¹⁴ Where memorials like the one in Syracuse include figurative and traditional elements, the bulk of the building, the size of the site, and its nonmemorial purpose mute them. After World War II, no typology equivalent to the World War I doughboy arose. Aside from the memorials erected overseas by the American Battle Monuments Commission, few World War II memorials convincingly used the classical language of architecture (columns, plinths, obelisks, arches), which for generations had supplied artists and architects with their memorial vocabulary. On the other hand, who has not visited a memorial playground or memorial hall? And who has not driven on a memorial highway? These forms of memorialization, while perhaps not new to the world wars, were formalized, consecrated, and put into practice between the wars and most emphatically after World War II.

Not unexpectedly, the World War II debate began in the pages of *American City* magazine, in August 1943. Editor Harold S. Battenheim, who had actively advocated living memorials during World War I,¹⁵ took up where his magazine's earlier campaign had left off, specifically supporting civic buildings as memorials.¹⁶ *American City* reported that 452 living memorials had been either built or promised after World War I,¹⁷ but the ubiquitous doughboy is ample evidence that the living memorial did not seriously threaten traditional memorials after the Great War. Many living memorials built after World War I, moreover, adopted either the form of the classical temple or the language of sepulchral

monuments, blowing them up in scale to accommodate this use, a strategy that would be contested after modern architecture entered the mainstream between the wars in the United States. Thus, many civic buildings erected as living memorials in the 1920s and 1930s expressed their memorial status forcefully and clearly.¹⁸

Battenheim's attempt to force the issue before the end of the war marks an important distinction between the efforts to memorialize the two wars. During the earlier war, people refrained from debating about postwar memorials, as if it were a forbidden topic while the nation waged war. Debate broke out only after the fighting ended. By contrast, during World War II hundreds of articles were written about memorials, most in favor of living memorials. Few commented on the strangeness of the debate. The closest criticism came from the old guard in the statement of Beaux-Arts architect Paul Cret, who headed the American Institute of Architects' War Memorial Committee, on behalf of the committee, "We believe that War Memorial projects ought not to be started, nor even planned, before the end of the hostilities."¹⁹ After World War I, advocates of living memorials introduced the idea tentatively. In spite of the fact that many living memorials were built after World War I, the traditional memorial held its ground in the debate. The World War II debate saw a scattered, ineffective defense of traditional memorials. Lewis Mumford, writing in *Good Housekeeping*—which demonstrates how widely debated memorials were—favored traditional memorials.²⁰ He argued that the proper form of memorialization prevents "us from neglecting our own duties and sacrifices as citizens of our country and of the world":²¹

Plainly, such a practical result cannot be achieved by an auditorium or a swimming pool, perfunctorily named a memorial. These useful structures do not bind us to the dead; they do not stir the feelings and rouse the energies that will keep us from being content with such debilitated efforts at cooperation as would merely give us the illusion of "peace in our time." That higher function and that higher purpose belong to the sphere of art, and such art is essentially of a religious character.²²

Mumford's would have been a common sentiment during World War I; in 1945 he represented a shrinking minority.²³

World War II also saw a widening definition of living memorials. After the earlier war, advocates focused on erecting civic buildings as memorials, part of the Progressive Era interest in civic improvement. During World War II, the movement gave greater emphasis to memorial parks and recreation centers, highways, and even a number of more abstract ideas, such as urban plans and even slum clearance, projects that reflect New Deal agencies such as the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Public Works Administration, not to mention the growth of the recreation movement.²⁴ Battenheim himself moved beyond a narrow concentration on civic buildings, using the pages of *American City* to advocate pools, parks, trees, "bookmobiles," and scholarships as living memorials.²⁵ While these sorts of projects were not new to World War II, their relative importance within the debate increased. Working with representatives from a number of government and civic organizations and several prominent

architects, including Antonin Raymond, *American City* published a pamphlet in 1945 detailing a broad range of living memorials, which shows the subtle shift from civic buildings to memorials that performed “community services.”²⁶ The change reflects yet one more difference between the living memorial movement in the two world wars. The shift in focus brought new players into the movement.

At the heart of the World War II movement for living memorials was a New Deal federal agency called the Federal Security Agency (FSA). Brought into being by the Reorganization Act of 1939, the FSA consolidated the administration of a number of preexisting agencies, including the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Youth Administration, the Office of Education, the Public Health Service, the Social Security Board, and the U.S. Employment Service. The Reorganization Act charged the FSA with the promotion of “social and economic security, educational opportunity, and the health of the citizens of the Nation.”²⁷ The FSA devoted much of its energy to health-related issues, forming a Committee on Physical Fitness in April 1942, with subcommittees in forty-two states, which encouraged “participation in physical fitness activities as a patriotic act.”²⁸ The FSA saw physical fitness as a national priority, organizing programs that encouraged a sort of physical fitness with obvious military application, training “self-disciplined individuals who reject soft living.”²⁹ The FSA launched a propaganda campaign that included pamphlets, weekly stories in *American Weekly* and *Look Magazine*, and short films on physical fitness shown in thirty thousand theaters nationwide. As part of the campaign, the FSA’s Recreation Division and its Committee on Physical Fitness co-opted the living memorial in order to press its own agenda, sponsoring the American Commission for Living War Memorials (ACLWM), which published the most widely used pamphlet on living memorials, *Memorials That Live*.³⁰

The pamphlet, funded in part by *Esquire* magazine, served both as propaganda for the movement—an employee of the advertising firm N. W. Ayer was on the Committee on Physical Fitness—and as practical instruction for communities wishing to build living memorials. An architectural committee headed by Howard Dwight Smith of Columbus, Ohio, where the American Commission for Living War Memorials was based, assembled a range of examples of living memorials, encompassing everything from simple campfire sites and cabins to trails, parks, playgrounds, gymnasiums, “community physical fitness centers,” and full-scale stadiums.³¹ Photographs of actual sites and buildings from all over the United States accompanied short paragraphs that promoted each project in the most general way. While most of these had neither been built nor served as memorials, they were offered as examples of the sorts of facilities that might serve as models for future memorials. The American Commission for Living War Memorials acted as a consultant and clearinghouse to help with more specific needs. The introductory text drew direct comparisons between civilian physical fitness, the fitness of troops abroad, and the act of memorialization:

The brave men and women, all physically fit, who have suffered the hells of Bataan, of Anzio and of Normandy, in Iceland, Alaska and the islands of the South Seas, the jungles of Burma, the plains of North Africa and elsewhere

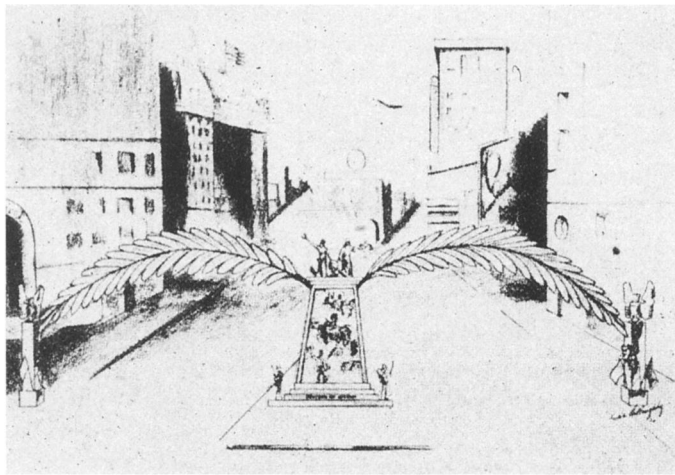
about the great round globe, some never to return, they deserve the undying gratitude of our generation. We *will* honor them and we need to signify in some growing form to the generations yet to come, our acknowledgment of this great debt. Living Memorials, planned for the benefit of neighborhoods, communities and whole cities will accomplish this high purpose.³²

The FSA and the ACLWM linked the ideal of patriotic sacrifice to the creation of institutions that would promote the sort of bodies ready to defend the nation.³³ Living memorials embodied this connection. In giving them government sanction, the FSA made their erection that much more patriotic.

Many of the key players in the living memorial movement had some association with the FSA. In fact, the promotional pamphlet for the Onondaga County War Memorial reproduced the text quoted above almost verbatim, removing the phrase about physical fitness and changing the names of some of the battles.³⁴ Agrarian utopian writer Louis Bromfield, who served on the FSA’s Committee on Physical Fitness, wrote one of many articles on living memorials published during the war in *Recreation* magazine. The National Recreation Association (NRA), which published *Recreation*, issued a wartime pamphlet on living memorials for which Bittenheim served as a consultant.³⁵ The American Legion, the Office of Community War Services, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, all of which sponsored living memorials, were associated with the FSA as well.³⁶ The information in these pamphlets was disseminated through the work of other writers. For example, John Dinwiddie, a California architect who wrote a promotional brochure on living memorials for Revere Copper and Brass, quoted extensively both from *Memorials That Live* and from the National Recreation Association’s pamphlet.³⁷

To see the World War II living memorial movement as driven by recreation overstates the case. Many noted architects wrote on the matter during the war, including Paul Cret, Fiske Kimball, Charles Maginnis (all in favor of traditional memorials), Joseph Hudnut, John Dinwiddie, and George Nelson (all in favor of living memorials). Companies, newspapers, and towns staged competitions during the war for the design of living memorials, and architecture clubs and museums held symposia.³⁸ In addition, important changes in allegiance expanded the movement. Comparisons to World War I are again instructive. The *Magazine of Art*, the journal of the American Federation of Artists, devoted entire issues to the problem of the memorial in May and September 1919. All but one of the articles firmly advocated traditional memorials. Between the wars the magazine switched sides, publishing Joseph Hudnut’s scathing condemnation of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C., which prepared the ground for a general sponsorship of living memorials by artists, architects, and art historians during and after the latter war.³⁹ The *Magazine of Art* was conspicuously quiet during World War II, publishing only a maddeningly vague piece by architect George Howe.⁴⁰

More significantly, the architecture press, which had supported traditional memorials during World War I, came out strongly in favor of living memorials during World War II.⁴¹ Writing in a May 1944 editorial, Kenneth Reid, editor of



3 194-Why, from *Task* 4 (1944): 44

Pencil Points, rhetorically queried his readership about the best way “of reminding future generations about the common men who died in the cause of human freedom,” asking: “Can it be done by ‘monuments’? We think not. . . . Let there be memorial parks and playgrounds and schools and community buildings. . . . Let whatever we do have a truly social purpose and a practical social result.”⁴² The editors of *Architectural Forum*, although they aired both sides of the debate, came out in support of the living memorial, publishing many articles on the subject.⁴³ Virtually every popular magazine took on the issue. Judging from the many letters to the editor in the architecture and popular press, which form a kind of parenthetical debate within the larger one, the subject struck readers as uncommonly important. Women’s magazines, *Good Housekeeping* notwithstanding, had their say. Frank McDonough, editor of *Better Homes and Gardens*, published an editorial in favor of living memorials, and an article in *Woman’s Home Companion* asserted that according to a poll conducted in 1945, a majority of its readership favored living memorials.⁴⁴ By the time communities were ready to build memorials, an extensive literature of propaganda and instruction about living memorials was ready for their use.

Changes in Representation

On the surface, the emergence of living memorials signals a shift in paradigms of representation. Modern war made conventional representation inadequate. In response to a memorial arch composed of palm leaves planned to span Broadway at Times Square in New York City, a parodic cartoon in the radical student architecture magazine *Task* poked fun at traditional memorials (Fig. 3).⁴⁵ Its title, which queried 194-Why, played on the wartime anticipatory term 194X, which referred to the unknown date of the end of the war. In an attack on artistic, architectural, and memorial conventions, the cartoon mocks iconic memorials. Joseph Hudnut summed up the problem in his polemic in the *Atlantic Monthly*:

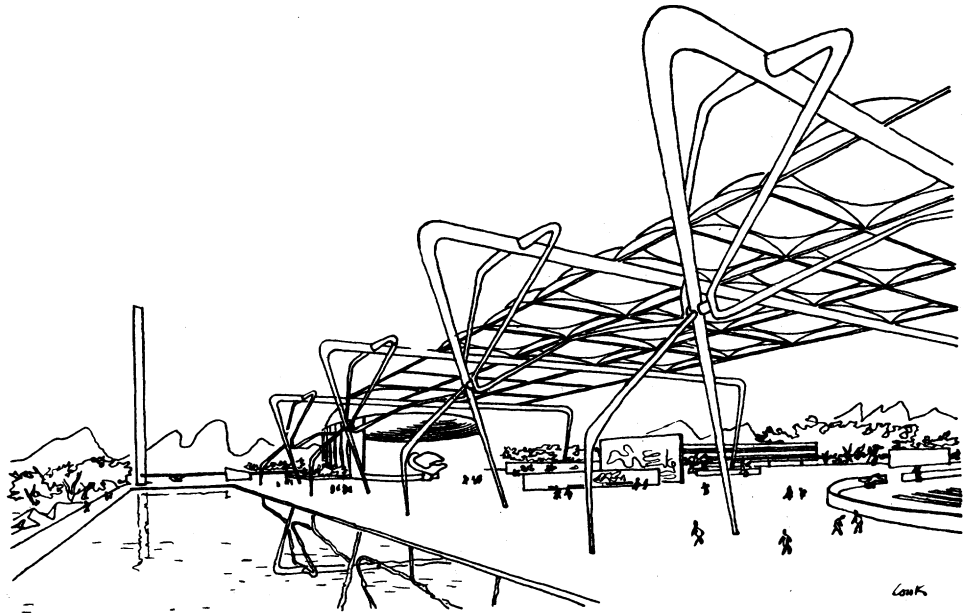
No picture, not even a thousand pictures, can show us war. Pictures are at best peepholes revealing the merest fragments of reality. The most candid of cameras—and of

motion picture cameras—selects, arranges and distorts. There is no realism which can compass war, this horror and madness, this confusion, pain, filth, and waste; neither is there any symbol which will invoke the smallest part of it.⁴⁶

The reference to the camera aside, which is just the sort of weapon that *can* compass war, Hudnut’s “peepholes” had been sufficient for centuries. Why was this suddenly not the case? Perhaps when the drama of war issued from the hands and bodies of men, the drama of its representation could still issue from the hands of artists, sculptors, and architects. The thrust of a saber, the firing of a musket, even the discharge of a cannon found easy expression in art. But what about the burst of an atom, the disintegration of a man’s body? How would Americans commemorate a war that included genocide, mass killings, and nuclear death in an age of near instantaneous reporting, in which human life and the image of death were devalued and made commonplace? How would Americans represent death in an age of mechanical destruction?

Modern war altered the nature of memorialization at a moment when traditional iconography was under siege, a situation demonstrated by the Iwo Jima Memorial. On the surface, this expensive, nonutilitarian, quickly dated (not least of all because of the soldiers’ fatigues) monument seems to be the worst perpetrator of the sins of the traditional memorial.⁴⁷ As a single heroic moment extracted from a particular battle, it represented the war directly, as opposed to the way living memorials sought to embody abstract ideals, such as the translation of wartime patriotism into peacetime community. That the Iwo Jima Memorial overcame these liabilities has much to do with its presentation as “real,” a verism beginning with its origins as a photograph and reinforced by public relations.⁴⁸ Giant plaster models of the memorial went on tour during the war as part of the “Mighty Seventh” bond drive, taking part in rallies on Times Square and Wall Street in New York City, Cleveland, Detroit, and Indianapolis.⁴⁹ There is a strong claim to be made for a relationship between World War II as a media war and the concomitant loss of iconic resonance. The Iwo Jima Memorial’s claim to veracity and, more important, the public barrage of press images and newsreels undermined the idealizations and allegorical potential of the traditional memorial. Iwo Jima, therefore, is an exception. Its success made sense because rather than emerging from an imagined or allegorical war experience, it came out of the media itself. While officially a memorial to the spirit of the Marine Corps in all wars, it has been co-opted by so many World War II memorials that it might be taken as a de facto national memorial to World War II—almost as an icon that floats free of its physical incarnation. Perversely, the Iwo Jima group is more a memorial to the home-front experience, a permanent reminder of “watching” the war through newspapers and film reels and acting out patriotic duty from afar through rallies in which plaster casts of the Iwo Jima Memorial played the lead. Home-front mobilization animated this memorial. Iwo Jima aside, the iconic memorial no longer represented the abstract, formerly its domain, because the media made war less abstract. After World War II, the iconic memorial was trapped

4 Louis I. Kahn, proposal for a World War II memorial, 1945 (photo: courtesy of the Louis I. Kahn Archives at the University of Pennsylvania)



in a mimetic relationship with the media, each reciprocally reinforcing or undermining the truth claims of the other.

Another substantial part of the problem, however, lay in changes in artistic traditions rather than changes in war. The martial figure, the mainstay of past memorials, was dead. "What will they do?" one writer asked. "Make statues of guys in jeeps?"⁵⁰ Architect George Howe, perhaps thinking of the controversy surrounding Horatio Greenough's seated George Washington (1832–41), now at the Smithsonian Institution, cast the problem back into the recesses of a nascent modernity: "Even the garments of the founding fathers are unfit for a deification ceremony."⁵¹ These critics found the traditional memorial passé, visually dated, conceptually ineffectual, much in the way that modern artists and architects rejected figurative painting and architectural historicism. Only the Iwo Jima Memorial, which, in effect, is a photograph, avoided the "embarrassment" associated with Mark Rothko's famous statement about figurative painting: "a time came when none of us could use the figure without mutilating it."⁵² While no contemporary critics connected the rejection of the traditional memorial explicitly with developments in abstract painting, the two run parallel courses, both beginning around World War I and becoming mature, powerful movements during World War II.

The failure to produce a new, appropriate, modern form would end, by default, in living memorials. An editorial of December 1944 in *Architectural Forum* stated that the challenge was to express spiritual values "without resorting to the banalities of the past."⁵³ The writer, possibly managing editor George Nelson, went on to name the memorial problem as one of modern representation: "The modern architect and designer has the opportunity here to create entirely new forms which can symbolize the mood of the people. If he cannot meet this challenge, we shall be forced inevitably to make our choice the useful and less symbolic form, perhaps unmarked by any special emotional or spiritual values."⁵⁴ Philip Johnson, who was busy in 1945 organizing an exhibition on war memorials for the Museum of Modern Art,

wrestled with the problem of representing the modern experience of war. He expected a modern form to emerge, and even after the war maintained that "virtually no noticeable advances have been made for years."⁵⁵ A month after he proposed the mound of bulldozed dirt, he asked Louis Kahn if he would submit a design to the museum's exhibition on memorials, which he intended "to counteract what we know will be a flood of horrors after this war."⁵⁶ In fact, Johnson had something specific in mind. He asked Kahn if he could use one of his designs for abstract sculptures that appeared in Paul Zucker's wartime planning book *The New Architecture and City Planning* (Fig. 4).⁵⁷ Kahn designed an enormous, abstract steel sculpture to illustrate the need for monumentality in the modern city. It had nothing to do with memory or commemorations, but that did not seem to matter to Johnson, who told Kahn that memorials need focal points, something that distinguishes them as memorials: "even the most rabid utilitarians admit this much."⁵⁸ In his mind, the living memorial still needed an architectural or sculptural element to articulate its memorial purpose. Yet erecting a gigantic "steel cage," as Johnson called Kahn's sculpture, in the middle of a memorial park scarcely articulates its commemorative status clearly. Johnson's idea thus ran into the same dilemma as the traditional memorial, as it merely substituted an abstract sculpture for a figural one.

Johnson's fruitless search for a modern memorial typology reveals the larger dilemma of representation during the war. Turning this around, however, the problem of representation turns out to be as much that of choosing the memory to represent as that of how to represent it. To many writers, past memorials no longer performed as memorials. They were either mute or, worse, they had become mnemonics of things better left forgotten. Broadly speaking, by World War II expectations for what to memorialize were in flux. While the traditional memorial generally has been associated with the heroics of war, sacrifice, death, or victory, the living memorial eschewed many of these associations for a celebration of democracy, community, the pursuit of "better living." As one



5 Letter to the Editor, "Unattractive Back," *Architectural Forum* 82 (Jan. 1945): 38

writer put it, "No! No victory arches! It's all too terrible a disaster to make into a public emblem. Half the world mad to kill and the rest of the world struggling to recover civilization. . . . No memorial arches shall keep us reminded. Some deeper shame within us shall assert itself that peace had to be assured for coming generations."⁵⁹ Instead of victory arches, living memorials honored a host of abstractions, not by inventing a new memorial typology but rather by offering facilities that promoted these ideals. This led to a number of damning critiques of traditional memorials: first, they were seen as embodiments of the indulgence of an earlier era; second, they were linked to a growing apprehension about slums and cities; third, they were associated with "old world ways" from which the war represented a break; and fourth, they were reviled for their associations with death. These four critiques, among others, show how the dilemma of memorial representation was enmeshed in a wider set of cultural concerns.

The Critique of Indulgence

Philip Johnson pinned the discomfort with the conventional memorial on the Puritan roots of the United States. "We are spiritual descendents of John Calvin and the English seventeenth century Puritans," he claimed:

. . . though we are no longer religious we still have some of Cromwell's iconoclasm in our blood. When we see monuments of marble and bronze, we see Veblen's "conspicuous waste." We consider monumental statuary semi-idolatrous and remembering our eighteenth century New England fear of the bogey of Popery, we frown upon any ceremonial ritual that is likely to arouse our emotions.⁶⁰

Utilitarian memorials, in Johnson's mind, were in vogue because they would guard against the great sin of traditional—that is, idle and idolatrous—memorials. Johnson saw the rejection of the latter type of memorial as part of an intrinsic American iconoclasm reaching back to the Reformation. Living memorials offered a positive alternative to traditional memorials and in some examples, like the one in Syracuse, gently expanded on traditional means of representing war-related memory. But their critique was both broader and more pointed than Johnson understood.

Indeed, many critics called traditional memorials useless and vulgar. Mrs. Alice Dilter of Indianapolis wrote to *Architectural Forum* in response to articles by Archibald MacLeish and Charles Maginnis, berating them for advocating "useless pieces of statuary." "To my mind," she wrote, "it is nothing short of criminal to spend in this way thousands of dollars which could be better used for needed community projects."⁶¹ In a similar vein, a serviceman wrote to the *Saturday Evening Post*: "People of moderate means were inclined to feel that [traditional] memorials were unnecessary and somewhat vulgar. So do I."⁶² After World War I, committed traditionalists like Ralph Adams Cram were still around to trumpet the old cause. He likened the living memorial to the "disingenuousness of presenting a pair of rubbers to a child for Christmas."⁶³ During World War II, few defenders of traditional memorials rose up to resist the critique of indulgence. Even a transitional figure such as George Howe, trained in the Beaux-Arts method but won over to modern architecture, considered traditional memorials to be "founded in the Doctrine of Conspicuous Waste."⁶⁴ One might expect to find Johnson's iconoclasm behind these criticisms, and perhaps it shadowed the contours of the debate, but other concerns also came into play.

Memorials have a history of disappearing during moments of intense political turmoil and war because of their power to incite emotion and political response.⁶⁵ During World War II, however, critics dismissed them not for their power but ostensibly for their lack of power, the reverse of iconoclastic violence. Writers unmercifully poked fun at the mass-produced Civil War statues on their nearly identical plinths, or World War I doughboys standing awkwardly in town squares. Philip Johnson delighted in illustrating his article with a World War I doughboy's posterior, wryly commenting that it constituted a traffic hazard.⁶⁶ Likewise, a letter to the *Architectural Forum* poked fun at an allegorical figure of Peace in Danville, Illinois, from World War I (Fig. 5), sarcastically commenting that it "turns its unattractive back to everyone entering the city. Loreda Taft was the designer but I have seen him blush as he looked at it."⁶⁷ The author's problem was not with peace but with its representation.

Out of the context of these seemingly iconoclastic comments emerges an argument for the expulsion of traditional

memorials from public spaces. For example, an article of June 1944 in the *Tennessee Planner* by the FSA's Recreation Division gloated over a decision by city officials in Chicago to reject a bequest for a statue of Alexander Hamilton, "declaring that Chicago parks already had enough statues!"⁶⁸ Amid today's intense political jockeying for memorials, this triumph seems unfamiliar. How does a city decide that its parks have too many statues? Presumably, it happens when statues no longer carry the same meaning. For many critics, traditional memorials were no longer aide-mémoire. In the words of Archibald MacLeish, then head of the Office of War Information, they suffered in the end from simply not being there.⁶⁹ Public memorials act like mnemonics in the theaters of collective memory that public spaces approximate. They hold cherished or important events in some kind of officially sanctioned order or disorder. This is what made MacLeish's criticism so damning. In essence, he called attention to the incoherence of civic spaces, of which memorials were but one part. It is not surprising, then, to find that the critique of indulgence naturally grew out of concerns about American cities.

The Critique of the City: The Living Memorial as Urban Planning

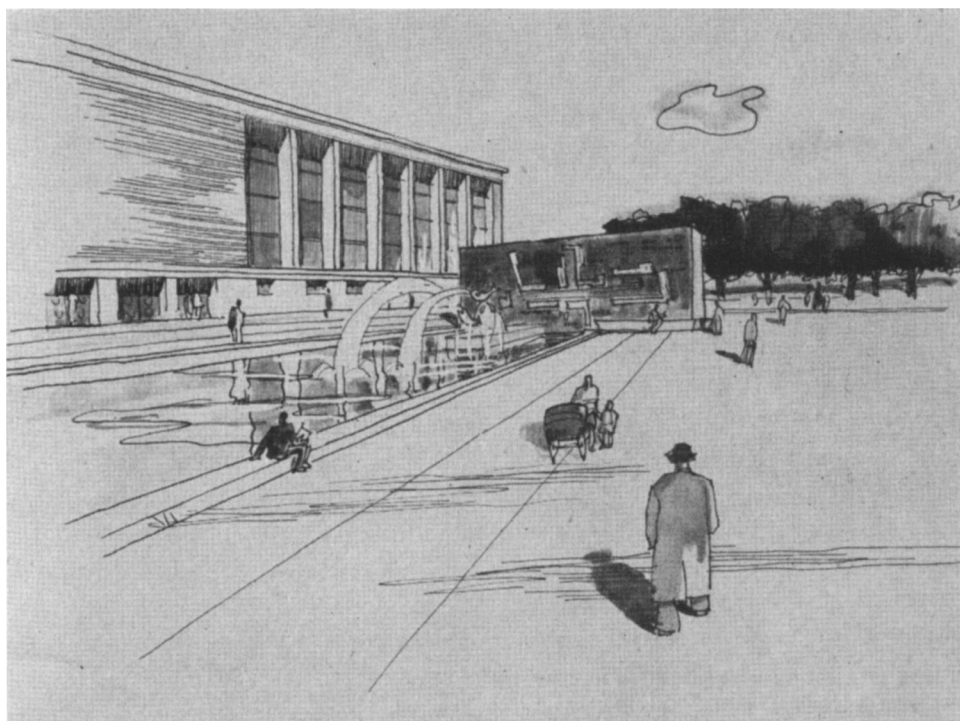
The critique of indulgence of traditional memorials is easily projected from the single monument to the scale of the city. Embedded in this debate is both a discontent with the city and a positive program through living memorials to address its problems. Writers repeatedly criticized traditional memorials for being random, pell-mell, irrelevant additions to cities. Zilpha Franklin, who worked for the FSA, lamented the proliferation of memorials. Associating them with the slum, she wrote in the *National Municipal Review*, "Too many—whose pedestals almost cover some little triangle of ground grudgingly left them and still others standing forlornly in the shadow of warehouses or in some section ear-marked for 'slum-clearance'—are all but forgotten."⁷⁰ The traditional memorial, which arose largely in the nineteenth century before the train and the automobile, fit uneasily into the modern, planned city. As cities grew to accommodate automobiles, many memorials were cut off from pedestrian patterns of commemoration by new streets or highways. Others were consciously placed in traffic circles without regard to how this would alter memorial practice. Increasingly, they began to be viewed as impediments to building better cities or stranded artifacts from an earlier era.

Writers explicitly connected memorial projects to planning. An editorial in *Architectural Forum* noted the way memorials were germane to planning: "From the dozens of memorial plans already announced, it is possible to discern a new planning trend."⁷¹ Notice that planning here lost its "urban" prefix for a more general planning spirit entirely in keeping with the intensified interest in planning in the 1930s and during the war. After all, Harold S. Battenheim started the debate in *American City* as a form of argument for postwar planning. The magazine suggested planning memorials as a home-front contribution to the war effort: "Building a united and constructive community spirit must be America's No. 1 effort toward implementing Victory. [Planning memorial community buildings] is one way to do it."⁷² In other words,

the living memorial would do its memory work even before it was built.

For Battenheim's many followers, the community center constituted a viable focus for urban planning schemes. Architects, community planners, and people from all facets of society promoted the community center as an appropriate war memorial. In addition to *American City*, the FSA and the National Recreation Association sanctioned the community center as a living memorial. They urged communities to decide democratically the best form of living memorial in order that it rise out of the community will and become a symbol of participation.⁷³ *American City* advocated the library as a living memorial, lending it a military connotation by calling it "a community intelligence center" that would serve as a democratic meeting place.⁷⁴ The magazine's many proposals throughout 1944 and 1945 turned attention away from the war and the past toward the civic ideal of the small town. In another article on living memorials, Battenheim argued for a definition of democracy based on community: "We need to make a place in our community plans for forging anew the community will, one which can give character and purpose to our towns and cities and shape the ideals of citizens."⁷⁵ Community centers were his practical answer, but rhetorically he also converted the idea of communal grief or memory, as represented in the traditional memorial, into "community will," a form of psychological postwar reconversion. An appeal to the will of the people also invoked democracy, which contrasted with the associations of iconic memorials with authoritarianism.

The community center as a way of combating the atomization of modern, urban mass society reaches back into the Progressive Era, and it cannot be traced adequately here. Suffice it to say that the war brought up the possibility of both physical and social reconstruction, leading to a revival of interest in the community center. With its ability to fold a mythic idealized past when "organic" community prevailed into anticipations of the postwar city and its new social arrangements, the community center was an ideal vehicle for the living memorial. The intersection of the search for lost community with the memorial suggests an attempt to refashion American memory, and thereby American culture. Living memorial advocates offered a vision of communal life resolved, they thought, to the changed urban conditions of modernity, even as they imported sentimentalized and romanticized social arrangements from a distant past. Their hostility to the "cluttered" memorials of the past was a much broader critique than at first it appears. The condemned memorials were from a particular past, the ostentatious memorials of the previous century their main targets. The living memorial, with its restrained memorial character and focus on community life, proposed a return to a set of bygone relationships believed to be inherent in the small towns of Puritan or preindustrial America. The community center, after all, behaved differently from other modern institutions like the hospitals, poorhouses, penitentiaries, and police forces that supplanted the community as caretaker of those unable to support themselves. Funded and run by a community or neighborhood, the community center would have no impersonal body at its helm; it would act as an embodiment



6 George Nelson, plan for a pedestrian Main Street with a memorial to planning, from Nelson, *Main Street: Now and Postwar*, 1943 (reprinted with permission from World Kitchen, Inc.)

of the public will. As such, it stood for a substantial social transformation.

Community centers, however, were part of a much larger interest in replanning American cities and towns. Kenneth Reid thought of planning as a form of memorial unto itself. In an editorial in *Pencil Points* of May 1944, he asked rhetorically, "Can the spirit that makes them fight be suitably memorialized by otherwise purposeless piles of stone or images of metal? . . . We think not."⁷⁶ Reid folded the memorial into the greater spirit of planning for which he crusaded during the war: "Let even Memorial Plans be made for neighborhoods, for communities, and for whole cities."⁷⁷ By his way of thinking, one could make a memorial holy by making it a plan because planning, he implied, was the most devout of American activities. The relationship was self-reinforcing. The act of planning would serve as a memorial and in turn the memorial would reify the plan, which was Reid's ultimate goal. Dedicating a plan as a memorial made it more likely to be carried out.

The postwar city would thereby become a memorial to the war. Reid's opposite number at *Architectural Forum*, George Nelson, played out Reid's idea in a wartime pamphlet for Revere Copper and Brass. He proposed to turn "Main Street, U.S.A.," into a pedestrian zone and to plant a great granite sculpture at the edge of the public space (Fig. 6).⁷⁸ While Nelson did not explicitly call it a war memorial, the sculpture derives from the tradition of using monumental walls on which to inscribe the names of the dead. Its placement at the end of a reflecting pool makes his intention clear. On close examination, where one would expect the names of fallen soldiers, the sculpture turns out to be the plan of the town itself, cut into granite for eternity. Thus, the memorial, in consecrating the town's plan, ends up consecrating the entire town as the three-dimensional embodiment of the plan through a clever syllogism: all postwar plans are memorials;

the town is the plan; therefore, the town is a memorial. Nelson's idea captures the patriotic spirit of the moment well. The act of postwar planning offered people on the home front a means of contributing to the war effort; the town itself would be a living embodiment of the wartime experience. At root, Nelson proposed rebuilding Main Street as a memorial to the war; the granite was the blueprint. Living memorials, as part of the planning effort, embodied the spirit for which the war was being fought. Thus, Nelson paired planning, usually an act of anticipation, with memorialization, usually an act of retrospection, as patriotic activities that spoke to a set of desired conditions after the war. In this light, American cities serve de facto as memorials to World War II, just as many German cities bear the unmistakable mark of the war and its aftermath in the Marshall Plan.

An unsettling problem emerges from the planning of "memorial plans," however. In order to plan cities as memorials, Americans first had to condemn the inherited city. Architect Horace Peaslee, for instance, recommended the removal of all the "tempors" (the temporary buildings of all previous wars) in Washington, D.C. "That in itself would be memorable in reminding us what to forget."⁷⁹ Percival Goodman went further, calling for slum clearance as a new form of living memorial: "To build for the future we today find it necessary to destroy what is bad. Let us then take as our first theme for the memorials, destruction. Let us destroy the slum."⁸⁰ Goodman, swollen with patriotic fervor, wrote this before the rise of the historic preservation movement. Other writers linked indulgence and urban planning directly. Instead of putting the money into a "useless pile of marble," a "Letter of the Week" in the *Saturday Evening Post* asserted, it "should go to slum clearance."⁸¹ The irony of creating a tabula rasa as a memorial seems to have been lost on these writers.

Goodman's second memorial theme, "building," expanded

on Kenneth Reid's and George Nelson's independent ideas to make memorial plans. He envisioned a form of decentralized memorial, "at each doorway a simple plaque with [a] soldier's name."⁸² Goodman's decentralization of memory can be seen as an attempt to address the needs of President Franklin Roosevelt's "one-third ill-housed." His proposal turned each home into a symbol of the cost, as well as the bounty, of war. In eschewing the heavy-handedness and high cost of traditional memorials, Goodman adopted an incredibly didactic solution. Yet, surely, if every doorway were a memorial, commemoration would be diffused, perhaps even mundane, and memory would be removed from public space, a radical excision of commemorative practice from the public sphere. In embracing decentralization, then *de rigueur* in planning circles, he reinforced mobilization more than memory: a society that lives in war memorials is never far from war.⁸³ However patriotic and optimistic their ideas were, Reid, Nelson, and Goodman also projected a view, common enough in its day, of the preexisting city as dispensable, something that had to be destroyed in order for a better world to emerge after the war. The disturbing use of destruction as a form of memorialization bespeaks a willful rejection of the past.

The Critique of the Past

In the battle over radically different methods of memorialization, the two sides fought over the role collective memory would have in the public sphere, in cities. Yet while memory was highly contested, the real trench fighting, as Horace Peaslee implied, was over what would be forgotten. Unlike the traditional memorial, the living memorial resists the status of relic, preferring instead simply to be present, in both senses of the word. The one reinforces the past with its presence; the other tempers the past through the banality of use, elevating the present. As a stimulant and organizer of collective memory, a memorial has as its purpose official history, the maintenance of a national or a local narrative. A living memorial departs from these roles. In lieu of official history, it promotes the present; collective memory yields to collectivity or collective experience, and the marking of time gives way to "living." Using the living memorial as a tool for urban planning clothed the planned destruction of the pre-war city in a camouflage of home-front patriotism. The memory of World War II, in the form of living memorials, would replace the unwanted mnemonic of the inherited urban fabric.

Arguing that iconic memorials were outdated, Joseph Hudnut described the Iwo Jima Memorial, then being marched around the nation in publicity campaigns to sell war bonds, as "a prophetic work heralding a population of marble soldiers."⁸⁴ Moving seamlessly from realism to public space, democracy, and finally memory, he predicted: the sculptors will fill our parks and squares with faithful presentments of our soldiers, explicit of helmet, bayonet, and button, and no homely circumstance slighted. They will try to bring the grim business to your doorstep in a democratic guise. They will not succeed. The war will hide its head behind the common man quite as easily as behind the trophies of conquerors. Do not ask the monument what is hidden. The monument does not remember.⁸⁵ To Hudnut, these memorials were no longer

capable of guiding memory. In fact, he believed that they warded against it, in part because there were so many of them, but also because, as others had pointed out, the realistic figural sculpture had become absurd.

The context for Hudnut, however, was spatial and political. He rued the way the memorials would "fill our parks and squares." At issue was a long history of populating public spaces with memorials, each a reminder of the increasing congestion of our cities, each placing one more frozen pedestrian in the way of the increasing rush of traffic, as Johnson's article lampooned. The neglected monuments had become symbols not of victory or of peace but of industrial capitalism's penchant for war, as well as its related inability to care for its public spaces and built environment. The old memorials no longer marked past triumph or greatness; they manifested the decrepitude of the entire system that brought them into existence. Without ceremony Hudnut wished them away and searched for a modern form to take their place. Through neglect of its memorials, a form of neglect of the past, modernity expunged memory from the memorial. While Hudnut offered no prescriptions, he implied that the new memorials had to embody a new social order and forge a different relationship to war, public space, and the past, the same argument he made in favor of modern architecture and planning. However, his vision of the new memorial was vague: "Whatever continues and sustains that for which our soldiers fought is a commemoration more eloquent and enduring than the loftiest monument."⁸⁶ In advocating a new tradition of memorials, Hudnut drew from the parallel "new tradition" of modern architecture and its critique of the nineteenth-century city, jammed with old, disregarded, haphazard monuments.⁸⁷ In this he was not alone.

The willingness of advocates to adapt old buildings as living memorials illustrates the extent to which the new form neglected the usual funerary markings of memorialization. *American City*, taking a more sympathetic view of the city than Percival Goodman, enthusiastically endorsed this practice.⁸⁸ The magazine pointed out that 460 United Service Organization (USO) centers would be available after the war at small cost. Also, armories, abandoned barns, hothouses, houseboats, old restaurants, business offices—almost any old building—would do as living war memorials.⁸⁹ It might be argued in defense of this approach that the living memorial did not deny the past so much as it affirmed the present through a pragmatic plan for reconversion to a peacetime economy. In the same article, for instance, the writer asserted the role of the living memorial as "continuing the work of liberation begun on the battlefield."⁹⁰ The argument is appealing. However, the utilitarianism of the *American City* article evinces a more assertive neglect: "In all instances memorial tablets and inscriptions should form an integral part of the plan . . ."—a reasonable gesture of memorialization, except that the sentence ends, "installed to be removable."⁹¹ The recognition that memorials, like other buildings, may be planned for obsolescence breaks radically from traditions of memorialization, which are based on an ideal, however quixotic, of permanence. Commitment to memory or a given past is weak if its physical trace is planned to be removable and possibly replaced.

Behind the idea of erecting removable memorials lurks the



7 Memorial Boulevard, Lakeland, Fla., 1997 (photo: author)

important shift in what people wanted to memorialize. Artist John Scott Williams questioned the very essence of memorializing war. Writing in October 1945, he asked, "Why should there be War Memorials when most people wish to forget the tragedies of war and turn to the more hopeful occupation of peace and prosperity."⁹² It was a statement, not a question, and his was a widespread attitude. By October 1945 the revelation of the Holocaust and the aftermath of the bomb made memory of World War II an especially delicate matter. Williams offered a number of proposals anyway, suggesting memorials be about virtually anything but war. First, he proposed memorials dedicated to maintaining American capitalism: "Some communities," he wrote, "will have memories of the part they played . . . in the struggle to preserve the economic system in which they have lived."⁹³ In another paragraph he suggested memorializing American democracy. And in yet another paragraph he wrote, "Our way of life has proved itself in war. It has brought us a great responsibility on an international scale. Memorials in consecration of this event have the same responsibility."⁹⁴ The "event," presumably, is neither war nor death but America's new role as an international superpower. Williams viewed the new responsibility of the "American Century" patriotically. In hindsight, it is possible to see with a more cynical eye the hundreds of such "memorials" the Cold War produced in the form of missile silos, reminders of what "superpower" status brought the United States.⁹⁵

Many living memorials resisted referencing the past, not merely in name and rhetoric but also in their way of wrapping elements of the past into the process of living, into communal and daily events. For instance, a memorial highway or road, even in a society that worships the automobile, cannot argue convincingly for the memory work performed by that road, obscured as it likely is by daily activity (Fig. 7). Memorial Boulevard in Lakeland, Florida, is particularly uncommunicative, giving no evidence of what it memorializes from its form or name. Since it neither uses established means of

communicating its purpose nor invents a new memorial iconography, it resists memorial narration and practice. Were Lakeland to use this road for commemorations on Veterans Day, it would serve its purpose with or without the name. This has been a common criticism since World War I, namely, that the memorial status of many living memorials has little or nothing to do with their utility. Commemoration, which historically has been arranged around a physical monument and expressly set apart physically and temporally from the quotidian, with this sort of living memorial becomes an invisible and unremarkable part of daily life. The more extreme forms of living memorial projects erase the markings of time, reinscribing them onto activities in the present, such as driving or doing errands, thereby altering consciousness of history.

Charles Maginnis, in an article written against living memorials, articulated the modern abhorrence of the past, connecting it with modern architecture's relationship to the past:

It would not surprise me if, in the eccentricity of modern thought, we were finally confronted by the principle that people and things were better forgotten. The new philosophy of architecture has been preparing for the idea. . . . The past is already dismissed as a distraction and a tyranny and only the passing hour is of consequence.⁹⁶

Indeed, Maginnis pointed out two problems. First, he observed the interdiction on representing or referring to the past, ruling out the range of historical motifs used in traditional memorials. This must be seen as part of a larger relationship to historical forms found most prominently in modern architecture. Second, if "the past is already dismissed as a distraction," then the past itself is inappropriate to memorialize. But without the past, we have nothing to memorialize: memory itself is threatened.

The very terms of the debate bring out the new relationship to the past. By preempting history, as it were, through the planning of memorials before all the evidence was in,

Buttenheim and other advocates of living memorials shifted the terms of commemoration away from war and victory, sacrifice and death to a defiantly ahistorical attention to postwar living. The outcome of the war was almost irrelevant to the process of memorialization. Through the memorial, they dedicated themselves to an anticipated set of ideas about life in postwar America. In fact, given the premature timing of the debate, the living memorial is hard to sustain as a memorial. By substituting the word “living” for “war,” the movement attempted to undermine the very *raison d’être* for war memorials: to signify the memory of war. In spite of its claims to the contrary, the most aggressively antitraditional living memorials did not memorialize the living, either; that would be nonsensical. They destabilized memory by condensing it into daily life, where it necessarily evaporates. Archibald MacLeish inadvertently made this point, contradicting the title of his *Architectural Forum* article “Memorials Are for Remembrance”: “A great people, now as before, is a people in which a sense of the past has become the sense of the future: a people in which the sense of history has turned its face about to become the sense of destiny.”⁹⁷ Turning toward the future, he thought, was central to a reconceptualization of the memorial. The slippery relationship between past and future is symptomatic of the living war memorial rhetoric.

Living memorialists destabilized time by undermining the ability of traditional memorials to tell time. Another method was to undermine the past to which they referred. What at first seems like a typological difference in memorial strategies ends up being temporal. Traditional memorials recall moments from the past. Living memorials displace that memory into activity in the present. As a moment of great social and geopolitical change that altered American collective consciousness forever, World War II spurred Americans to rethink their relationship to the past through the memorial. James Earle Fraser, a major sculptor of memorials, former president of the National Sculpture Society, and advocate of traditional memorials, lamented the sea change:

Does it seem right that the sacrifice of those who have given their lives be used as a means to raise money for practical memorials which will add to the comfort of the living? Many appear to think so. Is it possible, then, that our ideals are changing, that our thoughts are not so exalted as they were in the past?⁹⁸

Traditionally, memorials organize emotions and attitudes in time and give them a public dimension by rooting them in space. They act as temporal signposts duly recording the traces of tradition onto the built environment and offering themselves as sites for the worship of the past.⁹⁹ They have been key characters in the ceremonial pageants of collective memory. Commemorations on Memorial Day or Veterans Day often focus on important memorials, making the memorials the physical or material anchors of memory, props in the dramatic production and reproduction of national identity and history. Cultural forms that create the illusion of permanence, like memorials, are the altars of tradition. The religious metaphor, as Lewis Mumford made clear, is not completely rhetorical. With a change from the traditional to the living memorial, the liturgical symbolism or “body language”

of the former, its altarlike presence, would be replaced by a secular, utilitarian space.

By eschewing monuments, living memorials ask the public not to think back, not to observe the older tradition. They threaten, in fact, to alter the nature of ritual commemoration by diverting the flow of memory into the reservoir of the specious present and damming up its natural flow, so to speak, into the past. One way this happens is through their conflation of memory with other activities, for instance, with leisure. John Bodnar has written about how commemoration and leisure became more strongly intertwined after World War II.¹⁰⁰ The ordinary citizen redefined officially offered symbols for leisure or commercial ends. Solemn commemorations with nineteenth-century roots, such as Memorial Day, have turned into escapes from work and convenient extended weekends for holidays and yard work.¹⁰¹ Of course, much of this must be considered within Depression-era longings for a more equitable, affluent, and leisured society. Living memorials such as community centers and parks affirmed New Deal aspirations by providing sites of leisure and communal participation to underrepresented populations. Yet the hope that the use value of a community center would reinforce or create new memorial practices seems dubious at best. The living memorial accommodated leisure as commemoration by providing leisure sites that also happened to be memory sites. But the role of memory within this arrangement remains obscure. With World War II, American rituals of commemoration began to lapse into excuses for leisure activity with only nominal gestures, a plaque or a sign, to memory.

The Critique of “Dead” Memorials

Discomfort with the past is a common theme of modernity. The rhetoric of living memorial advocates suggests a discomfort with the morbidity of memorials, one in keeping with changing attitudes toward death. Before the rise of the living memorial, memorial artists leaned on traditions of funereal art developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when attitudes toward death were substantially different from those during World War II. The utilitarian memorial elided associations with death by avoiding traditional sepulchral symbolism, converting the memorial from a *memento mori* into a *modus vivendi*. The movement repeatedly shunned associations with death. For instance, in the same piece in which Percival Goodman called for slum clearance as a memorial, he also wrote, “I do believe that a deep problem is posed by this question of war memorials, a problem not to be solved by looking at Trafalgar Square, the Arc de Triomphe or Columbus Circle. These are monuments to the dead and sites for traffic congestion, funerals and other celebrations.”¹⁰² Hostility toward traditional memorials and memorial practices suffused his rhetoric: “But just what we are fighting against is death, and because we are, our true commemorations must take a new form.”¹⁰³ Using a similar rhetoric, another critic pleaded in verse, “No futile piles of stone to mar,/ The landscape view—both near and far!/ Dead monuments are but idle toys—/Give living things for our noble boys!”¹⁰⁴ In many nineteenth-century cities, cemeteries had been important sites of leisure, a pastoral counterpoint to the city. By World War II we find memorials “marring” the

landscape view rather than adding beauty to it. Even Francis Cormier, senior landscape architect of the New York City Department of Parks, shared this view. On the funereal tradition of memorials he wrote, "It has a certain (or is it uncertain?) kind of memorial character in that it reminds one of cemeteries."¹⁰⁵

Louis Bromfield advocated memorials that would take the form "not of dead stones and cast iron, but of living trees and parks, lakes and clean streams."¹⁰⁶ For Bromfield the appellation "dead" damned the traditional memorial, and he repeated it gleefully like a dirty word: "For more than seventy-five years in this country we have been raising 'dead' memorials. . . . During that period our cities and countryside became cluttered with 'memorials.'"¹⁰⁷ Traditional memorials possessed epidemic qualities, spreading their disease to both city and countryside. He bemoaned their clutter and denounced the money "invested in 'dead' objects, producing after a few years time little more than a sense of aesthetic distaste."¹⁰⁸ The living memorial was a symbolic cure for the city and the land—the planner's installation of a new immune system, one that literally cultivated a healthy population, guarding against the intrusion of death. It was more difficult to symbolize death in a living memorial—which was precisely the point. Moreover, it was even more difficult to create a traditional memorial in a society in which people treated death as a taboo. By World War II, as Geoffrey Gorer and Philippe Ariès observed, the West had become such a society.¹⁰⁹

Gorer and Ariès asserted that death had become a taboo in the twentieth century, replacing sex as the principal forbidden subject. While natural death became less a part of daily life, "violent death has played an ever-growing part in the fantasies offered to mass audiences—detective stories, thrillers, Westerns, war stories, spy stories, science fiction, and eventually horror comics."¹¹⁰ The affect of this "pornography of death" came at a cost to social norms surrounding natural death. According to Ariès, "what was once required is henceforth forbidden."¹¹¹ Their observations help explain the repugnance many writers felt toward traditional memorials, calling them cluttered and vulgar, that is, ostentatious, or, more simply, a reminder both of death and of effusive nineteenth-century forms of commemorating death. Both Ariès and Gorer understood the interdiction in wider social terms, linking it to "the moral duty and social obligation to contribute to the collective happiness by avoiding any cause for sadness or boredom, by appearing to be always happy, even in the depths of despair."¹¹² Gorer explained the phenomenon as a form of "fun morality": "the ethical duty to enjoy oneself (to prove that one is psychologically well-adjusted) and the generous imperative to do nothing which might diminish the enjoyment of others, so that the right to the pursuit of happiness has been turned into an obligation."¹¹³

The living memorial may have acted out a similar impulse, but on a mass scale, deflecting death into leisure, as represented by "neutral" nature, the escape of a highway or a park, or into community, as found in an auditorium or a community center. The pamphlet *Memorials That Live*, published by the American Commission for Living War Memorials, for instance, suggested "the use of recreational facilities as war memorials."¹¹⁴ The cover illustrates how the memorials

would turn the battlefield, depicted in the upper half of the image, into the playing field and recreational complex, depicted beneath a bundle of flags and a banner reading *Memorials That Live* (Fig. 8). The memorial came fully loaded with camping facilities, parks, athletic fields, gymnasiums, health clinics, waterfronts, and other forms of entertainment, each treated in its own chapter. The banner seems to wipe away the war, replacing it with the fun and games of a carefree society with plenty of leisure time.

Even in avoiding death, living memorials played on important traditions, embodying residual elements of the Puritan and Victorian experiences of death. For instance, the clever move to deflect the memorial away from death to life may be more than rhetorical. David Stannard, who has written on the experience of death in America, contended that the Puritan child was instructed to dwell on the horrors of death and hell, along with the terrible separation from family.¹¹⁵ In contrast, the Victorian child "was told to contemplate the sweet glory of salvation. Indeed, in place of death a new *life* was emphasized—death as a lonely finality or a grim eternity of torment was simply willed out of existence."¹¹⁶ A similar substitution defined home-front attitudes, in which postwar living took the place of thinking about war or death. The postwar period, often referred to as "the postwar," became a kind of afterlife. The living memorial was one of the many vehicles transporting people there.¹¹⁷

The Debate Continues

Unlike the grand memorialization after the Great War, the additive form of conventional memorialization after World War II that is so common in American towns might be interpreted in a number of ways. First, it suggests a continuity of commemorative practice. The addition of names, of a plaque, or even of another object in an ensemble of earlier memorials reinforced spatial and temporal continuity of commemoration. Second, the addition of names to a preexisting site suggests an ideological continuity between World Wars I and II. This is not surprising, given that World War II is sometimes considered an extension or a culmination of World War I. Whether by design or default, many towns reserve one plot of land as the commemorative site, which means that the additive memorial is itself a traditional approach. Such continuity notwithstanding, the success of the living memorial as an idea must be seen as a major shift in commemorative practice, if only because it quieted the enthusiasm for traditional memorials, placing in their stead useful buildings, parks, and highways whose memorial function spoke less clearly than did most purely devotional memorials.

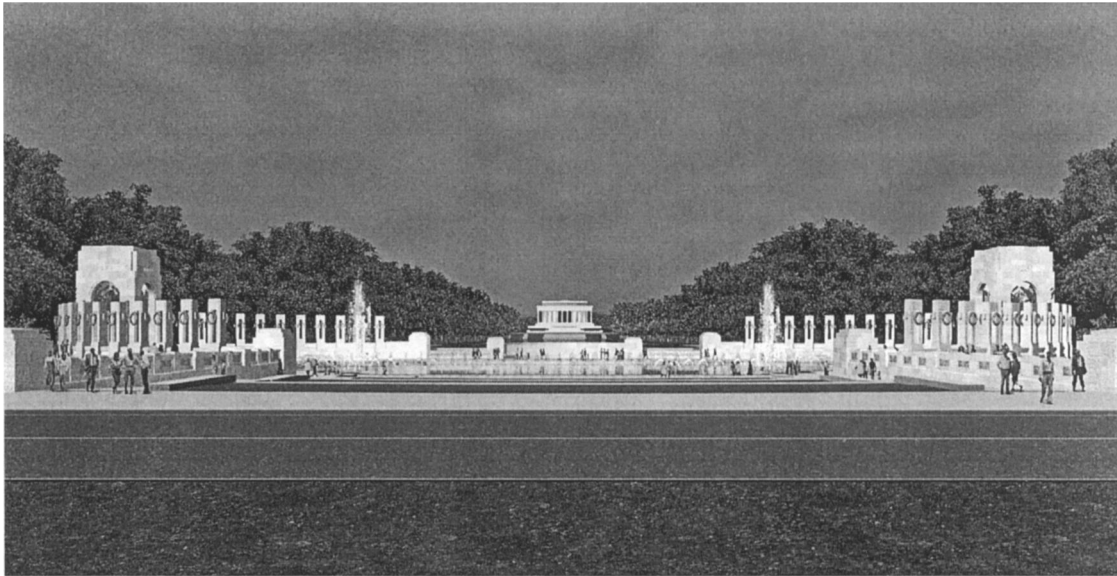
It is possible to think of the success of the living memorial in breaking down the hegemony of traditional memorials more in terms of introducing an uneasy pluralism into American strategies of memorialization. First, it undermined traditional memorials, attaching them to a number of easily disparaged ideas, including indulgence, the slum, death, and the past itself. These associations have undergone further development since World War II, but they continue to echo through current debates. Second, living memorial advocates used the first of these critiques to push an agenda of use value that became difficult, especially after the Depression, to ar-



8 Cover of American Commission for Living War Memorials, *Memorials That Live*, 1944

gue against. Proponents of tradition could scarcely attack community centers, parks, trees, libraries, or highways, even the last of which were important both for economic development and for national defense. The most tenable justification of tradition was to argue that these projects, while worthy, were not memorials. This was a common refrain, but it did not carry the same rhetorical power as the arguments of their

adversaries, especially given the fact that many living memorials were willing to provide some commemorative elements. Third, the living memorial presented a positive alternative, yoking itself to urban planning and the search for community that resonated during the Depression and war. By contrast, traditional memorials seemed inert, unproductive, and obsolete. Fourth, the living memorial idea shifted the very object



9 Friedrich St. Florian, proposed National Memorial to World War II, 2001 (photo: courtesy of the American Battle Monuments Commission)

of memorialization, edging away from sacrifice, victory, war, and death toward issues of community and democracy, tapping into important elements of national identity in the United States.

These were not new ideas to commemorate in a war memorial. Only the emphasis changed, but it did so for good reasons. Both world wars were new kinds of wars, fought for different reasons and on a different scale than earlier wars. They came with new relations to the media at a moment when artistic and architectural conventions were undergoing serious revision. Moreover, the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, the latter as both a weapon and an icon of the Cold War, further complicated memorialization. It makes sense that Americans attempted to revise traditions of memorials and, consequently, memorial practices in response to these conditions. Essentially, the living memorial introduced another viable means of commemoration, one that overlapped with existing strategies in important ways and departed from them in ways that broadened the kind of “memory work” that memorials do. The resulting culture of memorialization, one that, broadly speaking, continues today, resembles a delta in which the demands of many groups and commemorative practices compete uneasily. No single memorial can, nor perhaps should, satisfy their collective needs, which is one reason why memorials and museums, which currently satisfy many of the desires behind living memorials, have proliferated rather than retreated since World War II.

The return to more traditional forms of memorials in recent decades, including the National Memorial to the Korean War and the planned National Memorial to World War II in Washington, D.C., might be attributed to a number of factors. Maya Lin’s Vietnam Memorial broke down some of the obstacles to traditional memorials: it is iconic *and* abstract, affective yet not overly sentimental, specifically devotional without being neglected. Second, memorials are now as much a part of the heritage industry and the manufacturing of local history for tourism as they are a part of the practice of memorialization. The use of memorials for acts of individual or collective mourning here cedes to the act of

historical pilgrimage, such that little separates the experience of Williamsburg from Gettysburg (or from the Mall in Washington, D.C.).

The debates surrounding the National Memorial to World War II reflect the complexity of this delta.¹¹⁸ The design by Friedrich St. Florian is conventional, even *retardataire*, the sort of historicism that would have raised the ire of the living memorial movement during World War II (Fig. 9). Fifty-six stone pillars, each seventeen feet high, and two forty-three-foot-high arched pavilions surround a sunken plaza on the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. The plaza incorporates the old Rainbow Pool, entailing its restoration after years of dilapidation. Aside from criticisms that derive from the particularities of its site on the Mall, dozens of articles in newspapers in every region of the United States have distantly echoed the arguments developed by the living memorial movement over fifty years ago. In spite of postmodernism’s loosening of the modernist canon, the stigma against classicism remains robust. Journalist Paul Greenberg called the design “Federal Stalinist” and “a product of the Albert Speer school of architecture.”¹¹⁹ The critique of indulgence persists as well, complicated even more by issues that social history has interjected into national consciousness since the 1960s. Sally Kalson called the design a “classic example of excess”: “It is gigantic and grandiose, bombastic and authoritarian, faceless and monolithic. What does this have to do with the farmers, teachers, factory workers, janitors, police officers, salesmen, nurses and other everyday guys and gals who beat back fascism . . . and then came home to live relatively modest lives.”¹²⁰ Kalson’s expectation for the memorial to represent the modest lives of the common folk, a fair enough wish for the memorial, recalls the way in which living memorials were supposed to wrap wartime sacrifice into postwar living. It also makes one wonder, assuming a clear representation of this narrative were possible, whether a war memorial should represent the narrative of common people leaving jobs to fight and returning to “normalcy” after the war.¹²¹

The critique of the past has also played a part in the recent

debates. Herbert Muschamp, architecture critic for the *New York Times*, attacked the design for being uncommunicative about the past: "The design does not dare to know. It is, instead, a shrine to the idea of not knowing or, more precisely, of forgetting. It erases the historical relationship of World War II to ourselves. It puts sentiment in the place where knowledge ought to be."¹²² Muschamp's criticism recalls Joseph Hudnut's line that "the monument does not remember." Both authors offer withering assessments of conventional memorials as mute, disconnected from the past. Finally, the current debate resurrects the rhetoric against "dead" memorials. Arianna Huffington pointed out the things we forget "when we make an edifice to the dead and dying more important than our obligation to honor the living: There are more than 275,000 chronically homeless veterans, and roughly 500,000 veterans find themselves homeless at some time during the year."¹²³ Lewis Mumford might have asked Huffington if it is the role of memorials to solve social problems. And yet Huffington raises the important idea that the memorial as designed does not represent the complicated memory that World War II has become. A host of other ideas do not fit comfortably with St. Florian's design. These include Japanese internment, the experience of African-Americans during the war, the Holocaust, the bomb, and the experience of the home front, to name a few of the pressures exerted on this memorial. Some constituencies wanted the memorial to function as a museum as well, which represents a marriage of purposes that most approximates the living memorial idea but which perhaps asks the memorial to do too much. The demand for a memorial that operates as a museum also reflects the fertile ground the two ideas share and the emerging typological hybrid of memorial and museum most obviously found in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. While the rhetoric is not nearly as acerbic as it was after World War II, the National Memorial to World War II dredged up many of the same protests, albeit modified and perhaps blunted over the years. No formal living memorial movement remains, but the ideas behind it continue to influence memorial practices.

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Notes

I am indebted to Kurt Piehler (University of Tennessee), who opened his personal archives on war memorials to me and read through a draft of this essay. Thanks also to John Pinto (Princeton University) and William Hood (Oberlin College), whose sensitive suggestions are reflected throughout, and to the two readers for the *Art Bulletin*, whose thoughtful comments led to substantial revision. Parts of this essay were first presented in 1998 at the Popular Culture Association Conference in Orlando, Florida.

1. Philip Johnson, "War Memorials: What Aesthetic Price Glory?" *Art News* 44 (Sept. 1945): 25.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Kenneth Reid, "Memorials? Yes—but No Monuments!" *Pencil Points* 25 (May 1944): 35.

4. In 1948, according to a poll that queried 740 Chambers of Commerce across the United States, of the 265 that responded, only 20 had built or planned to build traditional monuments. Most communities were building stadiums, auditoriums, community centers, recreational fields, pools, parks, hospitals, libraries, and other civic buildings or spaces. See "War Memorials—Planned or Completed," *American City* 63 (Feb. 1948): 99–100.

5. For a brief analysis of living memorial ideas in New York City after World War I, see Michelle Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

6. William L. Bird, "Better Living": *Advertising, Media and the New Vocabulary of Business Leadership, 1935–1955* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1999); and Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).

7. Flack Advertising Agency, *The Onondaga County War Memorial* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Flack Advertising Agency for Onondaga County, n.d.), 41.

8. For a World War I-era bibliography on memorials, see Frank Weitenkampf, "A War Memorial Bibliography," *Architectural Record* 46 (Sept. 1919): 278–85.

9. See, for instance, "Liberty Buildings' as Soldiers' Memorials," *American City* 19, no. 3 (1918): 173.

10. Martha Candler, "The Community House as a War Memorial," *American Architect* 116 (Aug. 13, 1919): 195.

11. *Ibid.*, 196.

12. For instance, see Claude Bragdon, *Architecture and Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1918), 1–51, in which Bragdon argued that a new form of democratic life was evolving out of the community centers on military bases.

13. See Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Savage perceptively sees monuments as a forum through which Americans worked through the social and psychic reconstruction that paralleled the physical reconstruction after the Civil War.

14. For a study of American icons, see Albert Boime, *The Unveiling of the National Icons: A Plea for Patriotic Iconoclasm in a Nationalist Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

15. Virtually every issue in the months after World War I ended contained an article on living memorials.

16. "When the Boys and Girls Come Home," *American City* 53 (Aug. 1943): 2.

17. *Ibid.*

18. In this respect, the classicism of the Syracuse memorial is *retardataire*.

19. Cret's opinion was the exception in a series of comments on war memorials gathered in "War Memorials," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 3 (Jan. 1945): 28.

20. Lewis Mumford, "Monuments and Memorials," *Good Housekeeping* 120 (Jan. 1945): 17, 106–8.

21. *Ibid.*, 107.

22. *Ibid.*

23. In addition to the many scattered letters to newspapers and magazines throughout the war, the most prominent advocates of traditional memorials included Fiske Kimball, "Worthy of Their High Mission," *New York Times Magazine*, Nov. 12, 1944, 10–11, 39–41; landscape architect Markley Stevenson, "Enduring Memorials," and Margaret Cresson, "Memorials Symbolic of the Spirit of Man," *Landscape Architecture* 35 (July 1945): 146–48, and 140–42; James Earle Fraser, "Let Our New Monuments Inspire—and Endure," *Rotarian* 68 (Feb. 1946): 24–27, 50–52; and the National Commission of Fine Arts, "War Memorials," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 6 (Aug. 1946): 63–66.

24. Even during the war the shift was recognized: "Living Memorials," *Architectural Forum* 83 (Aug. 1945): 141.

25. "War Memorials That Further Practical Democracy," *American City* 59 (Oct. 1944): 72–75.

26. Anne Holliday Webb, *Commemoration through Community Services* (New York: American City Magazine, 1945). For the pamphlet, architect Antonin Raymond created a design for an expandable community center in a modernist vocabulary.

27. Federal Security Agency, *Functions of the Federal Security Agency* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1941), 5.

28. Federal Security Agency, *Meeting of the Committee on Physical Fitness* (Washington, D.C.: Federal Security Agency, 1943), 3.

29. Federal Security Agency, *A Nationwide Emphasis on Physical Fitness* (Washington, D.C.: Committee on Physical Fitness, 1944), 2–3.

30. American Commission for Living War Memorials, *Memorials That Live* (Washington, D.C.: American Commission for Living War Memorials, 1944).

31. The other architects included Ralph E. Griswold (Pittsburgh), C. Herick Hammond (Chicago), Burnham Hoyt (Denver), F. P. Jacobberger (Portland, Ore.), Walter R. MacCornack (Boston), Herbert J. Powell (Los Angeles), and William J. Sayward (Atlanta).

32. American Commission (as in n. 30), 2.

33. I am indebted to William Hood (Oberlin College) for this line of thinking.

34. Flack Advertising Agency (as in n. 7), n.p.

35. National Recreation Association, *Community Recreation Buildings as Memorials* (New York: National Recreation Association, 1944). *Recreation ampli-*

fied the World War I work of its predecessor, *Playground*, which became *Playground and Recreation* in 1929 and simply *Recreation* shortly thereafter.

36. The American Legion published its own instructional pamphlet on living memorials, much of it borrowed from FSA literature; National Americanism Commission of the American Legion, *Living War Memorial* (Indianapolis: National Americanism Commission of the American Legion, Dec. 1944).

37. John Dinwiddie, *A Monument the Living Can Use* (New York: Revere Copper and Brass, 1944).

38. "Alden Dow Winner in Texas Memorial Competition," *Michigan Society of Architects Bulletin* 18, no. 46 (1944): 14; Barre Granite Association, *War Memorials of Reverence: Summarized Description of the War Memorial Contest Designs* [Barre, Vt.: Barre Granite Association, ca. 1945].

39. Joseph Hudnut, "Twilight of the Gods," *Magazine of Art* 30 (Aug. 1937): 480–84, 522–24. After World War II, the *Magazine of Art* abandoned its support, publishing only George Howe's spirited call for a modern form of memorial, which scrupulously avoided taking sides (see n. 41 below).

40. George Howe, "Monuments, Memorials, and Modern Design—an Exchange of Letters," *Magazine of Art* 37 (Oct. 1944): 202–7.

41. For an exception to the rule during World War I, see "The Community House as a War Memorial," *American Architect* 116 (Aug. 13, 1919): 195–202, 205–7.

42. Reid (as in n. 3), 43.

43. "War Memorials," *Architectural Forum* 81 (Dec. 1944): 97–100.

44. "Living Memorials to Our War Dead," *Better Homes and Gardens* 24 (Nov. 1945): 12; and "Women Prefer Useful Memorials," *Woman's Home Companion* 72 (Feb. 1945): 12, 14.

45. *Task 4* (1944): 44. For the Times Square Victory Arch, see "Design of 'Victory Arch' for Times Square Shows Two Palm Leaves Spanning Streets," *New York Times*, June 23, 1943, 23; Edward Alden Jewell, "Memorials: Post-War Symbols Raise an Issue," *New York Times*, July 4, 1943, sec. 2, 6; and "On Victory Memorials," *New York Times*, July 11, 1943, sec. 2, 6.

46. Joseph Hudnut, "The Monument Does Not Remember," *Atlantic Monthly* 176 (Sept. 1945): 57.

47. Ibid. Hudnut specifically criticized the Iwo Jima Memorial in this way.

48. For the Iwo Jima Memorial, see Karal Ann Marling and John Wetenhall, *Iwo Jima: Monuments, Memories, and the American Hero* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991).

49. Ibid., 14, 31.

50. Edith M. Stern, "Legacy to the Living," *Coronet* 17 (Feb. 1945): 12.

51. Howe (as in n. 40), 207.

52. Mark Rothko, quoted in Dore Ashton, "Art: Lecture by Rothko," *New York Times*, Oct. 31, 1958, 26.

53. "War Memorials" (as in n. 43), 100.

54. Ibid.

55. Philip Johnson wrote this in a Museum of Modern Art news release for the display of Percival Goodman's Holocaust Memorial, intended for Riverside Drive. See New York, Library of the Museum of Modern Art, subject file: War Memorials. The news release is undated, but Goodman designed his memorial about 1947. The Museum of Modern Art never carried out the plan to stage an exhibition of war memorials. The original idea for an exhibition may have come from Talbott Hamlin, who was on the Architecture Committee with George Nelson. See New York, Archives of the Museum of Modern Art, Minutes of the Architecture Committee, Oct. 13, 1944.

56. Philip Johnson to Louis Kahn, Oct. 2, 1945, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Louis I. Kahn Collection, LIK box 61 (hereafter cited as Kahn Collection).

57. Paul Zucker, ed., *The New Architecture and City Planning* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), 588. The perceived failure of modern architecture to achieve monumentality had become an important issue by the early 1940s, one that Kahn addressed in his essay "Monumentality," in Zucker, 577–88. Space precludes elaboration here, but the monumentality debate grew out of the vexed problem of how to achieve the emotional charge and expressiveness of great architecture from the past without abandoning the modern movement. It intersects with the debate over war memorials since both confronted issues of how to create effective and affecting civic architecture. Most living memorial advocates, however, saw the building of civic structures not as architectural statements but rather as the creation of civic institutions. For the monumentality debate, see Christiane C. Collins and George R. Collins, "Monumentality: A Critical Matter in Modern Architecture," *Harvard Architecture Review* 4 (spring 1984): [14]–35.

58. Johnson to Kahn, Oct. 16, 1945, Kahn Collection (as in n. 56).

59. Elvira Slack, "No Victory Arches Wanted," *New York Times*, June 24, 1943, 20.

60. Johnson (as in n. 1), 9.

61. Mrs. Alice Dilter, Letter to the Editor, "Living Memorials," *Architectural Forum* 81 (Oct. 1944): 34.

62. "Letter of the Week," *Saturday Evening Post* 217 (Oct. 7, 1944): 48.

63. Charles Maginnis paraphrased this in his article "Living Memorials," *Architectural Forum* 81 (Sept. 1944): 166.

64. Howe (as in n. 40), 207.

65. The topping of Communist memorials in the former Soviet Union is but one recent example. Erik Inglis (Oberlin College) has pointed out that memorials may have been habitually "thinned out" in ancient Rome for

spatial as much as for political reasons. See Carol C. Mattusch, *The Victorious Youth* (Los Angeles: Getty Museum Studies on Art, 1997), 52.

66. Johnson (as in n. 1), 9.

67. "Unattractive Back," *Architectural Forum* 82 (Jan. 1945): 38.

68. "Why Not Build Living War Memorials?" *Tennessee Planner* 4 (June 1944): 149.

69. Archibald MacLeish, "Memorials Are for Remembrance," *Architectural Forum* 81 (Sept. 1944): 170.

70. Zilpha Franklin, "Communities Plan Living War Memorials," *National Municipal Review* 34 (Mar. 1945): 154.

71. "Living Memorials" (as in n. 24).

72. "Planning Memorial Community Buildings," *American City* 59 (June 1944): 113.

73. American Commission (as in n. 30), 4.

74. Julie Wright Merrill, "Public Libraries as War Memorials," *American City* 58 (Dec. 1943): 79.

75. "War Memorials," *American City* 58, no. 1 (1944): 36.

76. Reid (as in n. 3), 35.

77. Ibid.

78. George Nelson, *Main Street: Now and Postwar* (New York: Revere Copper and Brass, 1943), unpag.

79. Horace Peaslee, "A National War Memorial," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 7 (Mar. 1947): 116.

80. Percival Goodman, "Real War Memorials," *New York Herald Tribune*, May 17, 1944, 18.

81. "Letter of the Week" (as in n. 62).

82. Goodman (as in n. 80).

83. Paul Goodman and Percival Goodman, "A Master Plan for New York," *New Republic* 111 (Nov. 22, 1944): 656–59.

84. Hudnut (as in n. 46).

85. Ibid.

86. Ibid.

87. In his first book of 1929, Henry-Russell Hitchcock saw modern architecture as a "new tradition" and even capitalized the phrase, in *Modern Architecture: Romanticism and Reintegration* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993), 5. Sigfried Giedion echoed Hitchcock in the subtitle of *Space, Time, and Architecture: The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1941).

88. See "War Memorials That Further Practical Democracy" (as in n. 25), 75.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid., 101.

91. Ibid., 107.

92. John Scott Williams, "On War Memorials," *Art Digest* 20 (Oct. 15, 1945): 32.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid.

95. The idea is not so ludicrous as it may seem. The Cold War, as an extension of World War II, prevented a full sense of closure and accounts for some of the difficulty in memorializing World War II. See G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

96. Maginnis (as in n. 63), 107.

97. MacLeish (as in n. 69), 111.

98. James Earle Fraser, "Let Our New Monuments Inspire—and Endure," *Rotarian* 68 (Feb. 1946): 52. The *Rotarian* "debate of the month" was over war memorials. Excerpts from his article were republished in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 6 (July 1946): 33–34.

99. My thinking on the memorial in terms of acting out history and commemoration has been shaped by David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

100. John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15, 107.

101. While leisure and memorial events may share a long history, the desacralization of Memorial Day is widely acknowledged. In 1999, Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii introduced a bill in the first session of the 106th Congress for the restoration of the traditional day of observance of Memorial Day.

102. Goodman (as in n. 80).

103. Ibid.

104. Millicent Easter, "Living Monuments," *Recreation* 39 (Jan. 1945): 518.

105. Francis Cormier, "Comment," *Landscape Architecture* 34 (July 1944): 125. This contrasts with the World War I view of fellow landscape architect Fletcher Steele, "Worthy Memorials of the Great War," reprinted in the same issue of *Landscape Architecture*, preceding Cormier's article, 121–24.

106. Louis Bromfield, "Let's Have Living Memorials," *Recreation* 38 (Nov. 1944): 415. Similar rhetoric continued after the war as well. See William Mather Lewis, "Useful Ones Best Honor the Hero," *Rotarian* 68 (Feb. 1946): 50; and "More on Monuments," *Art Digest* 20 (Feb. 15, 1946): 3. See also Bromfield's essay "To Clear the Dross," in *Cities Are Abnormal*, ed. Elmer T. Peterson (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), 183–98, a biting critique of the cities of industrial capitalism and an argument for decentralization.

107. Bromfield, 1944 (as in n. 106).
108. Ibid.
109. Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974). Also, idem, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), originally published as *L'homme devant la mort* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977); Geoffrey Gorer, "The Pornography of Death," *Encounter* 5 (Oct. 1955): 49–52, reprinted in *Death, Grief, and Mourning* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1967). See also Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963). Gorer's work, in particular, responded to the taboo against death as he saw it manifested in the 1950s, which makes it an appropriate parallel to the living memorial debate. Recent literature on death is too vast to survey here. While Gorer and Ariès are dated, especially after the advent of AIDS, they are classics that most subsequent work continues to use as a point of departure or to argue against. Sally Cline made her debt obvious in *Lifting the Taboo: Women, Death and Dying* (London: Little, Brown, 1995). In a pop culture context, Timothy Leary built on many of the themes articulated by Gorer and Ariès in an attempt to subvert the taboo by "performing" his own death publicly; Timothy Leary, with R. U. Sirius, *Design for Dying* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). For two challenges to Gorer and Ariès, see William Joseph Gavin, *Cuttin' the Body Loose: Historical, Biological, and Personal Approaches to Death and Dying* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995); and Jonathan Dollimore, *Death, Desire and Loss in Western Culture* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1998), 119–27.
110. Gorer, 1955 (as in n. 109), 51.
111. Ariès, 1974 (as in n. 109), 92.
112. Ibid., 94.
113. Gorer, 1967 (as in n. 109), ix.
114. American Commission (as in n. 30), 3.
115. David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 171–74.
116. Ibid., 174.
117. Janet Temos (Princeton University) suggested the metaphor of the afterlife.
118. At first blush, it seems extraordinary that it took fifty years to break ground on a national memorial to World War II, especially considering that two later wars, Vietnam and Korea, have received their memorials. In a discussion with Kurt Piehler, he posited that memorials get built more readily for contentious memories, such as the Vietnam War. According to this view, World War II, the "good war," was less compelling to memorialize. An alternative view, however, holds that an age of multicultural awareness and post-Cold War reevaluation has made World War II in recent years a more contentious topic and, consequently, more important to memorialize. It must be noted, however, that it is not so unusual to memorialize a war long after its conclusion, especially as veterans celebrate important anniversaries of the war. Many Civil War memorials were erected at the close of the 19th century, at the twenty-fifth and thirty-fifth anniversaries of its conclusion.
119. Paul Greenberg, "Monumental Mistake," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, May 30, 2001. His was a common criticism.
120. Sally Kalson, "World War II Memorial a Classic Example of Excess," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, May 30, 2001. Likewise, Roger Ebert likened the design to the film *Pearl Harbor*, calling both "garish, expensive, tasteless" and a "monstrosity"; Ebert, "Bad Idea, Bad Spot for WWII Memorial," *Chicago Sun-Times*, June 1, 2001.
121. I suspect such a narrative would have been a bit foreign to people before World War I. The expectation extends the trajectory of memorialization in the West, which has slowly shifted from idealized representations of heroes and heroic acts (equestrians of generals) to memorials to anonymous soldiers (doughboys). It is one more step to represent war as a break in daily life, refocusing the idea of the war memorial away from the war toward its antithesis. Kalson's criticism reflects the shift in what Americans have come to expect of war memorials.
122. Herbert Muschamp, "New War Memorial Is Shrine to Sentiment," *New York Times*, June 7, 2001, A1.
123. Arianna Huffington, "A Monument to Distorted Priorities," syndicated column, June 11, 2001.