



Claudia Puttfarcken

On Scholarship as Research Assistant from Centre for German-Jewish Studies at the University of Sussex (2007-2008)

Email: Claudia.Puttfarcken\_at\_gmx.de

### German Historiography and the Discourse about the 'Singularity of the Holocaust'

The purpose of the study is to explore the history of the term singularity in the German post-war context. It focuses on the following aspects: when is the term used and where, as well as what exactly is meant in that particular situation. Also, the study considers who uses the term, who defends it and who opposes to it. Additionally, particular attention is given to the questions how the term came about and why it is being so successful as a theoretical concept, and what political function it serves.

As the most prominent debate regarding the singularity in Germany, The thesis examines the "Historians' Debate". It aims at generating an expanded understanding of the history of the term singularity in this debate. It illustrates the political use of the claim 'singularity' in the relativisation of the Holocaust in comparison to other genocides, as well as the role of the Holocaust in creating a post-war German identity.

Furthermore, the thesis considers debates centred on the "historisation" of the Holocaust, such as the "Broszat/Friedländer" debate. The debate regarding the "Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe" in Berlin with its representational aspect of singularity forms a third area of analysis. In regard to the increasing importance of globalised memory, the thesis also examines the Holocaust Memorial Day in Britain in the context of singularity as an example how the Holocaust is being remembered in a country that is not directly connected with the event.