



Retelling the Rosenstrasse: An Unbiased Account of the Only Successful Protest in Nazi Germany

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Introduction

Today, the Rosenstrasse Foundation exists to educate future generations about the protest and create a detailed database of the women involved.

In collaboration with Dr. Nathan Stoltzfus, who has produced several works about the protest, I sought to improve the Wikipedia page on the topic. The page had a host of issues, including personal opinions on the topic, missing information, and outdated facts. With this year being the 80th anniversary of the protest, we anticipated an increase in interest and sought to correct misinformation before it occurred. Removing bias from Wikipedia and further educating the public speaks to its importance. I was most interested in incorporating the women that were involved in the protest and finding a way to feature them on the page as well. The Rosenstrasse Website maintains a database of all of the women involved in the protest and is continuously adding more. They do so by researching records of intermarried couples in Nazi Germany and reaching out to descendants for more information. Occasionally, they find first or second-hand accounts of the protest as well. With this information, they create biographies of the women, along with any pertinent information, and add it to the database.



Figure 1- Rosenstraße 2-4 no longer exists. In its place stands this advertising pole, which details the events that occurred there. This year marked the 80th anniversary of the protest, and commemorations of the event were held in Berlin and Washington D.C.



Figure 2- A screenshot of the original issues on the Rosenstrasse Protest Wikipedia page. Implicit bias was a major problem in the initial wording of the page, as much of the text included some sort of personal opinion.

Abstract

The Rosenstrasse Protest was the only public demonstration made during the Holocaust against the mass deportation of Jewish people. In the protest, the German wives and relatives of Jewish men gathered at *Rosenstraße 2-4*, where their husbands and families were awaiting deportation. (Figure 1) For a week, they demanded that the Gestapo give their men back. As guards denied them for a week straight, the dozens turned into thousands. Due to the public nature of the protest, the Nazi regime, famously caring intensely about their image, had no choice but to release the men. My research sought to remove bias from the retelling of the Rosenstrasse Protest and ensure that the full impact of the demonstration was understood. As this protest was the only recorded demonstration of its kind, it is important to spread accurate information surrounding its circumstances and the women involved. With the rise of clickbait and biased falsifications, it is important that misinformation be fixed and accurate sources cited.

Methods

In attempting to create a cohesive narrative about the Rosenstrasse Protest, I first identified what needed to be corrected, aided by the Wikipedia flagged issues. (Figure 2) I relied heavily on my conversations with Dr. Stoltzfus to determine the best way to construct the narrative and direct my research. I also consulted his book on the matter and read his work over the course of the semester. Next, I created a rough draft of the updated page. I then researched my proposed edits using multiple sources to ensure my changes were correct. Finally, before publishing, I reviewed my language and made sure the page was readable. I took care to break up large walls of text with photos and wrote at a tenth-grade reading level to increase readability wherever possible.

Results

I was successful in creating a Wikipedia page that detailed the protest in a way that was easy to read and featured the women that made the protest possible, too. As for the Rosenstrasse Foundation, the Genealogy and Biography teams increased the number of bibliography pages and genealogy trees on the Foundation's website. The website benefitted from more information overall, as the more information we gather, the easier it is to paint a clear picture of the protest. I used the foundation's database, as well as other relevant Wikipedia pages, to fill the page as much as possible and increase its relevance and readability. I synthesized all my sources in a way that provided the most credible account of the demonstration and was able to elaborate more on its significance now that I had more information. Overall, my initial goals were accomplished, and I created a guide (Figure 3) on updating the website for future editors when more information is discovered.

Discussion

The ultimate goal of the Rosenstrasse Foundation is to spread awareness about the protest and share the stories of its protestors. This research aims to flesh out the history as much as possible and understand its impact on our understanding of the Nazi Regime. As this year marks the 80th anniversary of the protest, it is more important than ever to fight misinformation and biased viewpoints. My work in fixing the information on Wikipedia, the "most-read reference work in history" (The Economist, 2021) ensures those unfamiliar with the topic can receive an unbiased preliminary education. As more women involved with the protest are discovered, the page will grow, allowing the public to connect with their stories. Since the project is ongoing, the result of my work will continue to change, and the guide I have created will ensure that it continues to educate in an impartial way. I hope to continue working on the Wikipedia page and begin to reformat the Foundation's website with the same goals.

References

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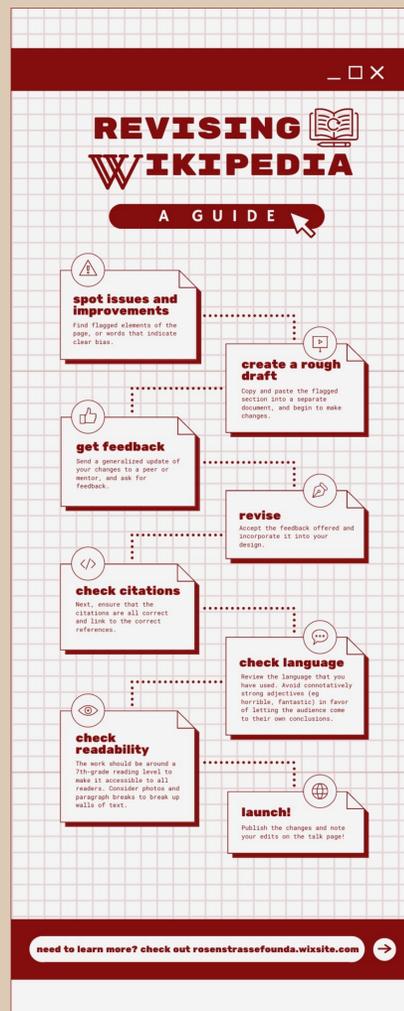


Figure 3- The guide I created to maintain the quality of the protest's Wikipedia page.