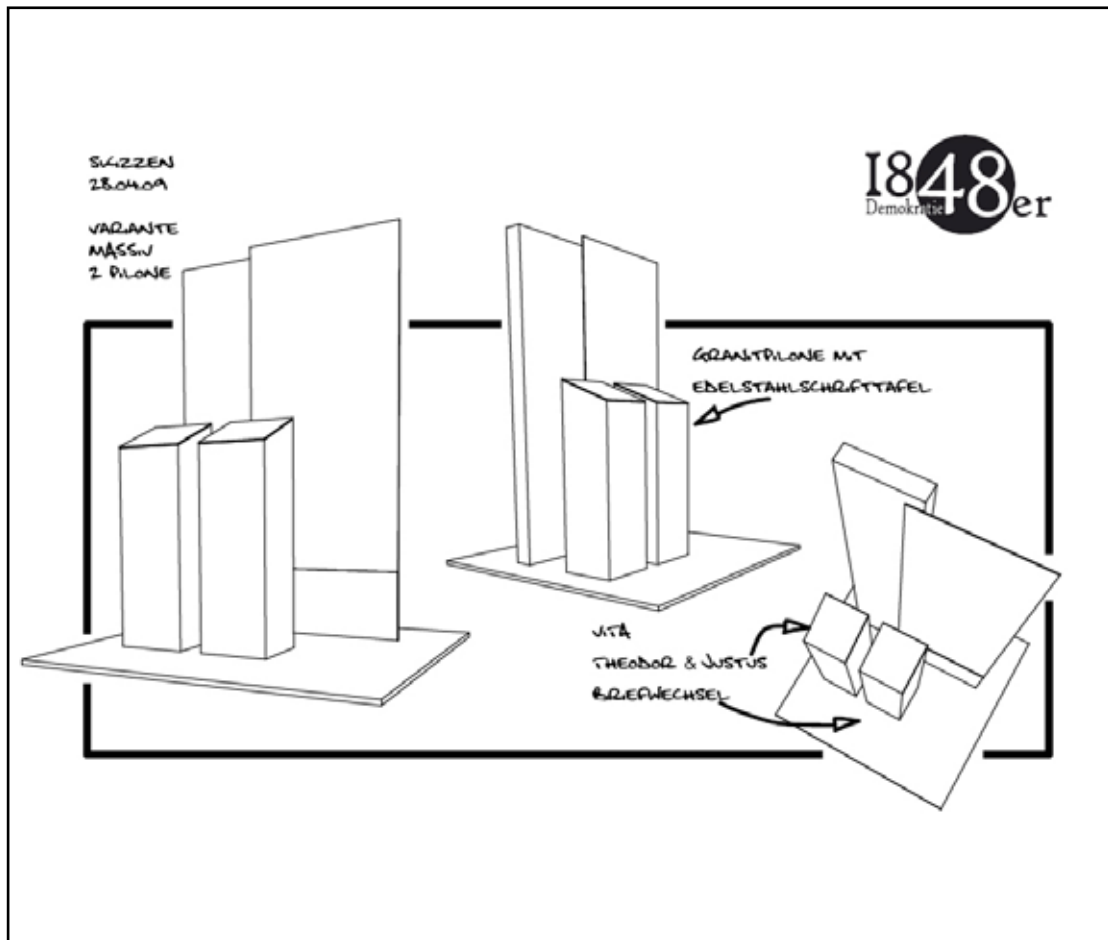


# Olshausen Monument, 2009

*Joachim Bodenstaff, Kiel & Berlin, Germany*  
*Slides follow the article.*



1. *Who were the Olshausen Brothers?*
2. *Why is there a stele on the campus of Kiel University dedicated to them?*
3. *What is this stele's message for today's university students?*

## **Who were the Olshausen Brothers?**

*Slide 1: Picture of memorial*

Every student and every single member of the alumni knows the name of “Olshausenstraße” from every day’s trip to the city of Kiel’s Christian-Albrechts-University. This street was named in memory of the brothers Justus and Theodor Olshausen. To keep their memory alive, a monument was dedicated to them; erected on June 5th, 2009. This was initiated by Dr. Joachim “Yogi” Reppmann – the very same man to whom we owe thanks for today’s conference.

In the course of my paper, I’d like to unfold the meaning and the background both of the memorial and the Olshausen brothers, as well as the reasons why their convictions and their actions can serve as an example for today’s students to help build a positive political future of their own country. Above all, there is the question: Why do we need a positive memory of the first fragile blossoms of German democratic history in the 19th century – apart from the important constant reminder of the Nazi catastrophe in German history.

*Slide 2: Image of Theodor Olshausen*

Theodor Olshausen was born on June 19th, 1802 in Glückstadt (on the river Elbe). He died on March 31st, 1869 in Hamburg. He was a member of the provisional Schleswig-Holstein government in Kiel, a staunchly Republican politician and newspaper editor. He, who had been a student of law in Kiel and Jena, was one of the spokesmen of the 1848 “March Revolution” in Schleswig-Holstein, which he had helped to prepare as the managing editor of the newspaper “Kieler Correspondenzblatt”. The political aim of this revolutionary movement was Schleswig-Holstein’s secession from Danish rule. As a former member of the Provisional Schleswig-Holstein Government he faced the prospect of being imprisoned by the Royal Danish authorities; therefore, he took refuge in the U.S.A. in the year 1851. In America, he became managing editor and joint owner of the German newspapers “Der Demokrat” (1856-1860) in Davenport, Iowa and “Westliche Post” (1860-1865) in St. Louis, Missouri – the newspaper which saw the beginnings of the career of a certain Joseph Pulitzer. In the U.S.A., too, he fought for his Republican concepts and published for the abolition of slavery.

*Slide 3: Image of Justus Olshausen*

Theodor’s older brother Justus Olshausen was born on May 9th, 1800 in Hohenfelde and he died on December 28th, 1882 in Berlin. In 1817 he had taken part in the *Wartburgfest* and in 1848 he was the first vice-president of the Schleswig-Holstein constitutional parliament in Kiel. He was a Republican linguist (Oriental languages) and “Vortragender Rat” (i.e. a reporting councillor) of the Prussian Ministry of Education in Berlin. Like his younger brother, he actively supported the movement for independence within the dukedoms of Schleswig and Holstein, which were Danish at the time. In the year of the 1848 Revolution he became Curator to the University of Kiel and, at times, very influential within the political leadership of the Schleswig-Holstein parliament. After the failure of the Schleswig-Holstein uprising he was sacked by the Danish government in 1852. On recommendation of his friend Alexander von Humboldt this successful linguist, who had proved a very able organizer during his time as President of Kiel University, was appointed chief librarian and professor in Königsberg (East Prussia). From 1858 to 1874 he was reporting councillor in the Prussian Ministry of Education, and from 1860 he was a member of the Prussian Royal Academy.

***Why is there a stele on the campus of Kiel  
University dedicated to them?***

*Slide 4: Picture of Yogi Reppmann and living descendants of Justus Olshausen*

The official inauguration with the unveiling of the memorial was preceded by a festive ceremony, which was attended by high-ranking personalities. Yogi Reppmann had been very successful at inviting illustrious guests; among them representatives of the city of Kiel and the president of Kiel University. Apart from papers about the latest research on the revolution of 1848 in Schleswig-Holstein, there could be encountered living descendants of Justus Olshausen, who had been found by Yogi Reppmann: a retired professor of law, who still carries the name of Olshausen, gave a talk in which he combined the history of his own family with the happenings of the year 1848.

The President of the City of Kiel, Kathy Kietzer, put into very apt words the merits of the young Republicans around the Olshausen Brothers within both the political and the historical context.

*Slide 5: Picture Kietzer – Fouquet*

From the curriculum vitae of Theodor Olshausen, president Kathy Kietzer said in her speech at the ceremony on June 5th, 2009:

“Theodor Olshausen, born on June 19th 1802, became a student of law in 1820 and studied in Kiel as well as in Jena. Here, he was the only student from Kiel who joined the “*Jünglingsbund*” (association of young men), who stood for changes in contemporary society – which meant more liberty and democracy. The Prussian Ministry of the Interior even put him on a “Wanted Ad” because of his political activities. He fled to Paris where he worked as a private teacher under a false name...

... Theodor Olshausen was an imperturbable, courageous and straightforward person, who worked for free thinking. Many inhabitants of Kiel don't know which meritorious masterminds of our own democracy can be found in our city. We must be more aware of the roots of our democracy.

Especially the young people of our country should know more about positive aspects of our past. By this, a more relaxed – but at the same time not uncritical – approach to another aspect of our past can be made possible. Simultaneously, this could be an important step to counteract the general lack of interest in politics. Today we can learn: without steadfastness and activity there can be no democracy.”

It is of considerable interest, here, that president Kietzer comes from a Danish family background. Even today it is not easy for many citizens of Danish descent in Schleswig-Holstein to view the activities of the 1848 protagonists with respect to their contemporary relevance, because these 48ers didn't want anything short of a complete secession from the “Danish Comprehensive State”. The “uprising of 1848”, as it is called in Schleswig-Holstein and by German historiography, is in Denmark still labeled as a “rebellion”. During the war that followed the happenings of 1848, the Danish monarchy lost about one third of its territory and a major part of its population to the winners; i.e. Prussia and Austria in 1864. This included Denmark's second-biggest town Altona, which is now a part of Hamburg. This loss has always been remembered by what can be called “the collective consciousness” of Denmark.

President Kietzer's analysis, which was put forward neutrally and soberly, as well as her stress on the republicanism and the democratic activities of the Olshausen brothers, is – in my opinion – the correct approach. The main thing is to look forward into the future and to offer young young people orientation, i.e. the awareness of “What is politically desirable?” and “Where can we find political role models?”

*Slide 6: Picture of Theodor Olshausen as an old man*

In a letter to his brother Justus, Theodor Olshausen wrote on April 18th, 1864 from St. Louis:

*“Another reason to return to Germany could have been the situation in Schleswig-Holstein. In mid-December I received an invitation to come back to Schleswig-Holstein by half a dozen of old Democrats, because they lacked any form of leadership. For me, however, it appeared obvious right from the beginning, that things would turn out just as they had in 1848, because people again clung to the Duke of Augustenborg and the other German Princes; and that – given the fact of the German “blind trust” – nothing could be done about it. If one doesn't want to act radically, one should leave it altogether.”*

These lines summarize the general political Situation of the day. Yet they prove, at the same time, that liberty and democracy could be achieved elsewhere; i.e. in the U.S.A.

For me, another fact is important to be noted at this stage; in order to be able to illustrate the special role of the revolutionaries of 1848. This is their being rooted in what is called Vormärz (pre-March, which means the period between the end of the Napoleonic Wars

and March 1848). In her speech, president Kietzer mentioned the *Jünglingsbund*, which even today is something hardly known in Germany. The *Jünglingsbund* was a secret organization of about 120 young fraternity-brothers, democrats and revolutionaries of German universities in the early nineteenth century – whose traditions are still being kept in some academic clubs of today. The political aims of the original organization were the abolition of the feudalistic governments in the German “micro-states”, as well as their amalgamation in order to form a unified German state. In 1823, the *Jünglingsbund* was grassed on and dissolved by the Prussian police before it had been able to carry out any actions. Its members were imprisoned and sentenced to long incarcerations – especially in Prussia.

These revolutionaries of the early nineteenth century, and today’s academic associations who keep their traditions at German universities, form the decisive link with which the realization of Yogi Reppmann’s “stele – project” has been possible.

*Slide 7: Design of the stele*

Why the stele is there and makes people ponder can be explained easily: Yogi Reppmann had the idea, he found sponsors and supporters; an architect made the final design; a stone mason produced it and a construction company did the installation.

More interesting is the question, how this idea was turned into reality and how Yogi Reppmann managed to get the attention of the students of Kiel in order to motivate them into participating in the event of the memorial’s inauguration – especially because of the fact that this took place at noon of a Friday; when most students have normally disappeared into the weekend. Yogi Reppmann succeeded in keeping the students longer at their university on that specific Friday – and not only historians, but also students of economics, law, geology and medical studies attended the ceremony.

As for me, I could add a small part to the realization of this project and today I can speak to you as an eye-witness. It was in the summer of 2009, I study politics at Kiel University (CAU) and I was helping the Governor of our state government, Peter-Harry Carstensen. In the Governor’s Office, I worked Frank Trende, who was writing the Governor’s speeches. He has been in government service since the 1980s and is currently managing the cultural department in the Ministry of Education. He has a passion for Local History and meanwhile one could have the impression that half the books about our beautiful Schleswig-Holstein have been written by him. During a work session at a breakfast table we started talking about private matters and I told him about my interest in 1848ers from Schleswig-Holstein.

First and foremost, my interest in the 1848ers stemmed from the fact that the majority of them used to belong to my own student fraternity, Teutonia Kiel. This fraternity is one of the above-mentioned clubs which was founded by young Republicans – among them Justus Olshausen – in the first half of the 19th century: the *Vormärz*. In the case of my fraternity, Justus Olshausen and people around him walked to the big political fest on the Wartburg castle and – inspired by the big celebration of “400 years Lutheran Reformation” and “4 years Battle of the Peoples” (*Völkerschlacht*) near Leipzig – founded this fraternity. This was in 1817. Theodor Olshausen became a member, too.

At the time of 2009, I was a passive member of this fraternity, after having been an active member from 2002 to 2004. Meanwhile, I am one of the “Old Boys”. The “ancestral research” within my fraternity automatically led me to the 1848ers, most of whom knew each other from their time at Kiel University in the 1810s and 1820s. One could say that the Provisional Government of Schleswig-Holstein was something like an alumni-network of the CAU. All protagonists had attended Kiel University and had met through their fraternities who had been home to nearly all students in Kiel. Today the fraternities have to compete with other leisure time entertainments; and they are rather existing as a sort of niche.

*Slide 8: Picture of the Provisional Government, 1848*

Frank Trende was the person who gave me the very useful piece of advice to go and see his friend Yogi Reppmann in Flensburg (on the Danish border). Contact was established easily, and just a short time later Yogi gave a talk about the Olshausen Brothers, their lives from the Wartburg-Fest through their fraternity years into the Revolution of 1848 and, finally, into the liberty of America. All this took place at my fraternity's house, Kiel-Düsterbrook, Moltkestraße.

First Yogi Reppmann came to see us out of "zoological interest", i.e. he had had some doubts, as to how conservative a bunch we all might be. That is to say, a fraternity, founded in 1817, in which even today young men are submitted to drinking and fighting duels versus other fraternities with sharp swords. He then quickly realized that we are rather a liberal and friendly circle of mates who are avoiding nationalist sentiments and who like to celebrate traditional togetherness among young and old academics of Kiel University.

This tradition has been kept by my fraternity since 1817 – with certain breaks because of external reasons. The hardest cut in our history was the time between 1933 and 1945, when our fraternity was seen as an élite male organization which didn't fit the Nazis' view of *Volksgemeinschaft* (i.e. their idea of a commonwealth of Germans). For this reason, we had to keep up our traditions in strict secrecy. - Freedom, therefore is the value which is treasured most in our fraternity; right from the start when our young brothers join.

*Slide 9: The Active Members*

This our claim, which is to make young university students of all denominations familiar with political and historical developments and phenomena, has been carried out by our fraternity brothers with considerable success. Consequently, it was no problem whatsoever to recruit all our active members, whose numbers are five to six per semester, for the support of Yogi Reppmann's stele project. What followed were long evenings, in which Yogi Reppmann and the young students made a joint effort to get things going and to master all logistic challenges. Then there were uncounted lunch breaks at the university's refectory,

## Erinnerung an zwei „48er“

Christian-Albrechts-Universität ehrt die Brüder Theodor und Justus Olshausen mit einer eigenen Gedenkstele

Kiel – Obwohl die Olshausenstraße gewissermaßen die Central Avenue der Universität darstellt, lässt sich heute nicht mehr rekonstruieren, ob ihr Name auf Theodor oder seinen Bruder Justus Olshausen Bezug nimmt. Als Vorkämpfer der Demokratie während der 1848er Revolution hätten beide es verdient – weshalb ihnen die Alma Mater nun eine eigene Gedenkstele widmet.  
Von Oliver Stenzel

Der eine war ein bedeutender Gelehrter, der andere ein umtriebiger Journalist und Verleger. Gemeinsam war Justus und Theodor Olshausen ihr engagiertes Eintreten für die Demokratie in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Während der Kieler Orientalistik-Professor Justus 1848 nicht nur



Spurensuche nach den demokratischen Wurzeln der Stadt: Universitätspräsident Gerhard Fouquet, Stelen-Initiator Joachim Reppmann und Stadtpräsidentin Cathy Kietzer vor der neuen Gedenkstele.  
Foto Molter

*Kieler Nachrichten, June 6, 2009. The daily newspaper of Kiel, the capital of Schleswig-Holstein.*

which were spent handing out flyers to attract attention for the planned ceremony and to motivate fellow students to attend it.

*Slide 10: Picture Inauguration (audience)*

The success was quite remarkable. An audience of more than a hundred thronged in a lecture theatre which was originally designed for about eighty people. The media were present, too. The *Kieler Nachrichten*, i.e. the biggest local newspaper, published a long article about the inauguration, and a student-run on-line broadcasting station as well as the local TV produced and broadcast video reports. It might be worth noting that the *Kieler Nachrichten* are direct descendants of the *Kieler Correspondenzblatt*, a newspaper once founded by Theodor Olshausen in 1830.

### ***What is this stele's message for today's university students?***

*Slide 11: Yogi Reppmann in front of the stele, and the article of Kieler Nachrichten*

For five years the Olshausen stele has been a familiar sight on the campus of Kiel's Christian-Albrecht-University. It stands on every student's way to the first matriculation and to every renewal of it. The stele invites every passer-by to stop and consider the question: "What is the link between the students of today and the brothers Justus and Theodor Olshausen?"

The stele's concept has been (successfully) copied twice in Kiel. One stele was erected in honor of Wilhelm Hartwig Beseler, the President of the Provisional Schleswig-Holstein Government in 1848. The other one was erected in honour of the banker, politician and scientist Wilhelm Ahlmann who was the Secretary to the Provisional Schleswig-Holstein Government in 1848.

*Slide 12: Yogi Reppmann and Wolfgang Börnsen, MdB with Brandenburg Gate*

Another idea is slowly bearing fruit; that is to say, the idea of commemorating the year 1848 nationwide: The uprising in Berlin, the provisional government in Kiel, the first parliamentary congress of St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt. This was the very first attempt to establish in Germany a truly parliamentary democracy.

Wolfgang Börnsen, a member of the German parliament who, like Yogi Reppmann, comes from Flensburg, works on a project to establish the 18th of March as a national memory day of German parliamentary history – even after his retirement from the Bundestag. His idea is being welcomed by members of all political parties. It will be interesting to see what will be the outcome of his initiative. The number of its supporters is constantly rising.

The concept of putting side by side the important reminders of our political catastrophes in the twentieth century and their democratic "counter-design" of the year 1848 is, in my opinion, a very good one. Let us protect our democracy – in many parts of the world today it is anything but self-evident!

It is of crucial importance to explain to our young people the roots of our democracy; and to show which shortcomings there were in this first try; and to point out which of them led to its ultimate failure; in order to make the point: If you fail, try again – try harder!

The stele is a wonderful complement to Kiel University's motto: PAX OPTIMA RE-RUM – peace is the most precious of things. The Christian Albrecht's-University in Kiel was founded in 1665 as a university for the whole country – still under the impressions of the catastrophe of the Thirty-Years-War (1618-1648), which had laid to waste complete territories and annihilated their population. The university's motto is a reflection of this

yearning: “peace is the most precious of things”. The yearnings for freedom of the 1848ers who emigrated are based on this, because one can’t separate peace and freedom.

The stele of the Olshausen brothers is to remind us of the 1848ers’ strife for freedom; a struggle that couldn’t be won at home – yet it could finally be accomplished in the U.S.A. It is, furthermore, to remind us of the willpower of single personalities which can precede great successes – yet it is, finally, to remind us not to put freedom at risk light-heartedly; getting it back – or achieving it – is always a fierce struggle.

An American proverb says: “Freedom isn’t free”. This is entirely correct because freedom has to be defended – every day anew.

The task of keeping peace and freedom can be supported by memorials. The stele of the Olshausen brothers can be such a support because it makes young people think about these values.

At the end of my paper, let me quote the Austrian songwriter and cabaret singer Fritz Grünbaum, who was born in 1880:

“For me, the German word *Denkmal* (i.e. Memorial) is a life-long imperative that consists of two words: *Denk* (i.e. Think!) and *mal* (i.e. at least once).

Fritz Grünbaum died in 1941, murdered in Dachau Concentration Camp, in the center of Germany; but far from peace and far from freedom.

*Denk-mal*: THINK – at least this once!



1848, Provisional Government of Schleswig-Holstein;  
second-from-right, Theodore Olshausen.

## Olshausen Monument Kiel



## Mr. Reppmann, living descendants of Justus Olshausen and me at „Förde Club Kiel“





## Advertising for the event



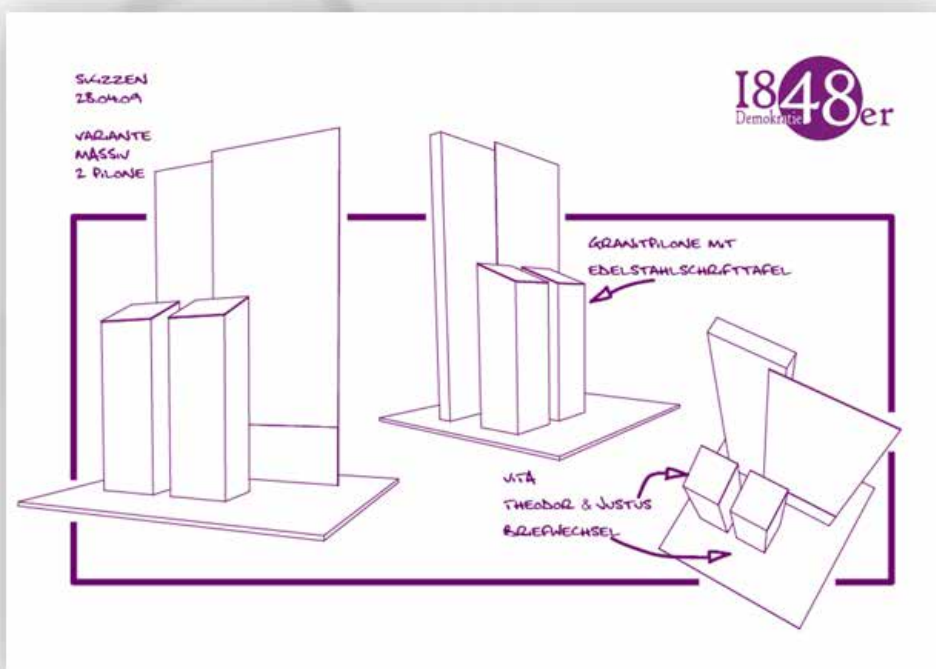
## Mrs. Kietzer & Prof. Dr. Fouquet



## Theodor Ohlshausen



## The draft of the stele



## Justus Olshausen \* 1800 - † 1882



Justus Olshausen  
1830—52 Professor in Kiel



## Inauguration of the stele



# Inauguration of the stele

## Kieler Nachrichten Landeshauptstadt Kiel / Roman 27

### Erinnerung an zwei „48er“

Christian-Albrechts-Universität ehrt die Brüder Theodor und Justus Olshausen mit einer eigenen Gedenkstele

Kiel - Obwohl die Olshausenstraße gewissermaßen die Central Avenue der Universität darstellt, lässt sich heute nicht mehr rekonstruieren, ob ihr Name auf Theodor oder seinen Bruder Justus Olshausen Bezug nimmt. Als Vorkämpfer der Demokratie während der 1848er Revolution hätten beide es verdient - weshalb ihnen die Alma Mater nun eine eigene Gedenkstele widmet.

Von Oliver Stenzel

Der eine war ein bedeutender Gelehrter, der andere ein unermüdlicher Journalist und Verleger. Gemeinsam war Justus und Theodor Olshausen ihr engagiertes Eintreten für die Demokratie in der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Während der Kieler Orientalistik-Prozesse 1848 nicht nur zum Rektor der Universität, sondern auch zum Vizepräsidenten der Landesversammlung wurde und sich gegen den Einfluss Dänemarks auf die deutschen Herzogtümer wandte, gehörte der Kieler Verleger Theodor Olshausen der provisorischen Regierung an.

Beide bezahlten nach dem Scheitern der Revolution für ihr Engagement. Justus Olshausen verlor 1852 Katalanen- und Lehramt, sein Bruder ging ins amerikanische



Spurensuche nach den demokratischen Wurzeln der Stadt: Universitätspräsident Gerhard Fouquet, Stele-Initiator Joachim Reppmann und Stadtpräsidentin Cathy Kießler vor der neuen Gedenkstele. Foto: Moller

Exil. Dort wurde er Redakteur und Mitinhaber mehrerer demokratisch ausgerichteter Zeitungen, während Justus als vortragender Rat Referent für alle geistlichen Universitäten im preussischen Kultusministerium wurde. Im In- wie im Ausland konnten sie dementsprechend weiterhin Akzente setzen.

Auf diese beiden eindrucksvollen Biografien kann seit gestern jeder stützen, der das Verwaltungshochhaus der

Christian-Albrechts-Universität passiert. Rechts vor ihm steht nun die Gedenkstele, die in Worten und Bildern kurze Porträts der Olshausen-Brüder präsentiert. Georg Wawerla vom Kieler Studio 3B hat sie klar und minimalistisch gestaltet, die Kosten von rund 12.000 Euro wurden maßgeblich von der Sparkassenstiftung Schweswig-Holstein sowie der Provinzial und der Investitionsbank Schleswig-Holstein getragen.

„Ich freue mich, dass der Name der Landesuniversität auf diese Weise mit dem Beginn der Demokratie verbunden wird“, unterstrich Gerhard Fouquet, Präsident der Kieler Universität, gestern bei der Einweihung der Stele. Staatsrätin Cathy Kießler hob dagegen die demokratischen Wurzeln Kiels vor dem Hintergrund aktueller rechtsextremer Vorfälle hervor.

Angeregt wurde die Errichtung der Stele durch den aus

Flensburg stammenden Historiker und Unternehmensberater Joachim Reppmann, der in seiner zweiten Wahlperiode Mandat auf die Geschichte Theodor Olshausens übernahm und sich von ihr inspirieren ließ. Getragen wird das Projekt zudem von dem Verein „Gedehertes Erbe“ und der „Gesellschaft für Kieler Stadtgeschichte“. Vor dessen Hintergrund scheint in Zukunft auch die Errichtung weiterer Stele denkbar.

## Mr. Reppmann and Wolfgang Börnsen MdB with Brandenburg Gate

