



The Aftermath

The Holocaust as a history of experiences 1945-1949

Fifth International Conference on Holocaust Research

A conference organised by the Federal Agency For Civic Education (bpb) in cooperation with the European University of Flensburg and Humboldt University of Berlin.

25-27 January 2015 dbb forum Berlin, Friedrichstrasse 169/170

The years immediately following the war played a decisive role in shaping how the mass crimes of National Socialism were perceived. For the Allied soldiers who liberated the concentration camps, the horror at the images of emaciated inmates and piles of corpses was a dominant factor in their films and reports. For the inmates who were fortunate enough to survive the final weeks of SS domination, their lives were saved yet the future was still uncertain. Who would take care of them? Where would they go? Immediately after the war, millions of former concentration camp inmates, forced labourers and others were interned in “displaced person” camps (DP). International aid organisations looked after them and made efforts to reunite families. People in the DP camps themselves began to swap stories and to write down reports on what they had experienced. Many left Europe to begin new lives in the USA, Canada, Australia or Israel.

In the years directly after the war, the German people were also confronted with the crimes committed by the National Socialist regime. In many places, Allied soldiers forced local people to go and look at the concentration camps located in their own neighbourhoods. Footage from the films that the Allies had made of the concentration camps was included in German cinema programmes in the first post-war years. The Nuremberg Trials, which began in November 1945 and received extensive radio and press coverage, showed the former National Socialist elite as mass murderers. In the years following the end of the war, the perpetrators attempted to escape punishment for their deeds. Many who had not been interned by the Allies attempted to go into hiding or to flee the country. The “rat lines” that were in place allowed many National Socialist perpetrators to escape to Latin America or the Middle East via Italy.

The years following the war were therefore a key time for the experiential history of the Holocaust. It was then that the first reports of the horrors were set down, the first dreadful images from the concentration camps widely shown and a number of high-ranking perpetrators were put on trial before the world. At the same time, the Allied victors were faced with the immense problem of how to deal with the German people as a whole. Given that so many had participated in the National Socialist regime, did a “collective culpability” exist? Was it necessary to suppress these Germans in order to prevent a new outbreak of violence? Or was there a chance that “re-educating” them with enlightenment and democracy could make them into a civilian population that could be integrated into the global community once again?

Given that the National Socialist crimes had been committed in the years directly preceding them, the period 1945 to 1949 can be seen as a kind of laboratory for coming to terms with the Holocaust – one that is particularly worth exploring in detail today. Especially since so many pictures and stories about the Holocaust today seem to be fixed and shape our view of National Socialist crimes, looking closely at these years is useful in examining these direct experiences, images and reports, in coming to terms with the atrocities that were seen and heard for the first time in those years.

Links to civic education work on the conference topic will be established in a practical forum. Research

findings will be channelled into practical civic education. Parallel to this, specific concepts and models will be presented in a project exchange focusing on how these cause-effect relationships can be translated into practical activities both within and outside schools.

Programme (last amended: 23rd January 2015)

25 January 2015

- 10.00 a.m. **Registration with coffee reception and project exhibition**
Selected from submissions for the project competition, current projects and teaching methods from memorial work, schoolwork and out-of-school and intercultural education work will be presented in the form of a (poster) exhibition.
- 11.30 a.m. **Welcome address**
Thomas Krüger, President of the Federal Agency For Civic Education
- 12.00 noon **Opening presentation**
On Jewish and other Constellations
Dan Diner, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Department of History
- 12.45 p.m. Snack
- 2.00 p.m. **Introduction**
Harald Welzer, European University of Flensburg & **Michael Wildt**, Humboldt University of Berlin
- 2.30 p.m. **Lectures and discussion**
Displaced Persons – refugees – forced migrants
- Jewish Displaced Persons in Occupied Germany: The "Saved Remnant's" Collective Identity and Diverse Experience***
Atina Grossmann, The Cooper Union, New York
- The victims in the country of murderers: Approaches to a paradoxical temporary existence***
Michael Brenner, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich
- Coerced Migrants in Europe, 1945-1949***
Stephan Troebst, University of Leipzig
- Discussion**
- Moderated by: Susanne Beer**, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin

- 4.30 p.m. **Presentation of selected practical projects (project competition)**
Presentation of current projects and teaching methods from memorial work, schoolwork and out-of-school and intercultural education work that explores – in practical educational situations – the topics covered by the conference.
- Moderated by: Susanne Beer**, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin
- 5.00 p.m. Coffee break
- 5.30 p.m. **Lectures and discussion**
Networks and perpetrator profiles
- From Nuremberg to Washington – Views on criminal prosecution of NS perpetrators by US judicial authorities***
Andrej Angrick, Hamburg Foundation for the Promotion of Science and Culture
- Jäger and Mengele. Two NS direct perpetrators in post-war Germany***
Wolfram Wette, Albert Ludwig University, Freiburg
- Or Hitler's Furies: German Women as Witnesses, Accomplices and Perpetrators of the Holocaust***
Wendy Lower, Claremont McKenna College, California
- Discussion**
- Moderated by: Michaela Christ**, European University of Flensburg
- 7:30 p.m. End

26 January 2015

- From 9 a.m. **Project exhibition - with coffee reception**
Selected from submissions for the project competition, current projects and teaching methods from memorial work, schoolwork and out-of-school and intercultural education work will be presented in the form of a (poster) exhibition.
- 10.00 a.m. **Lecture**
From the DP Camps to America; The Jewish Survivors' Experience
Françoise S. Ouzan, Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center
at Tel Aviv University, Israel
- 11.00 a.m. **Lectures and discussion**
Worlds destroyed – attempts to restore order

Jörg Baberowski, Humboldt University of Berlin

Postwar return of the Jewish survivors

Jan Gross, Princeton University

Whose heritage? Early postwar German-jewish historiography – the case of Hamburg

Miriam Rürup, Institute for the History of the German Jews (IGdJ), Hamburg

Discussion

Moderated by: Susanne Beer, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin

1.00 p.m. Snack

2.00 p.m. **Lectures and discussion**
Images – witnesses – things

Allied Atrocity Films 1945-46: Representation of the Victims and German Responses

Ulrike Weckel, Justus Liebig University, Giessen

"Aus dem Brande gesammelte Reste" -

The Jewish Commitment to Saving Looted Cultural Property after 1945

Elisabeth Gallas, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Early Testimonies - no longer at the margins

Linde Apel, The Research Centre for Contemporary History in Hamburg

Discussion

Moderated by: Michaela Christ, European University of Flensburg

4.00 p.m. Coffee break

4.30 p.m. **Lectures and discussion**
Denazification – re-education – processes

„America's Germany“? The Reeducation of Germany after World War II

Katharina Gerund, Friedrich Alexander University, Erlangen-Nuremberg

The practice of denazification. On the 'political cleansing' of German society after 1945

Hanne Lessau, Ruhr University, Bochum

The Nuremberg Trials and the Holocaust

Alexa Stiller, University of Bern

Discussion

Moderated by: Susanne Beer, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin

- 6.30 p.m. Reception
- 8.00 p.m. **Series of films: *Selling Democracy***
Introduction: Rainer Rother, Deutsche Kinemathek film archive, Berlin
- 9:30 p.m. End

27 January 2015

From 9 am **Live broadcast of the Bundestag's commemoration ceremony on occasion of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day**

10.00 a.m. to
1.00 p.m.

Practical forum with parallel workshops

Here, research findings and methods are linked with elements of civic education. In the workshops, conference participants are given the chance to get acquainted with both content and methodological aspects. A choice of the following six workshop themes is given.

Workshop 1 – Room: Köpenick, 3. OG

Early reports, photographs and films of National Socialist crimes

Using early reports, photographs and films of National Socialist crimes opens up a variety of possibilities for historical-political education. Which social themes can be derived from these? How important is the role played by documents of the crimes (photographs, films, newspaper articles) in past and present social reality? How can these special contemporary documents be used effectively for educational purposes?
(Workshop language: english)

Ulrike Weckel, Justus-Liebig-University Gießen

Christa Schikorra, Concentration camp memorial ground Flossenbürg

Workshop 2 – Room: Atrium I & II, 1. OG

First reports y survivors

Most of the contemporary reports that are used in historical-political educational work have originated since the 1980s. However, there are plenty of reports from directly after the war. These are particularly interesting given that they convey the direct impressions of what eyewitnesses experienced without this being clouded by developments in the following post-war decades. When comparing early and later reports, it is evident which stories have been preserved and which topics and narratives were gradually lost in the years after the war. What role can early reports play in education work?
(Workshop language: german/englisch)

Sharon Kangisser-Cohen, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Irmela von der Lühe, Free University of Berlin

Workshop 3 – Room: Charlottenburg, 4.OG
Media portrayals: historical accuracy vs. fictionalisation

New media are being used more and more frequently in historical-political education. Facebook and Twitter can help to establish the immediacy of historical experience. Smartphones can be used to make historical events visible anywhere. But where should the line be drawn in the case of historical recreations – at what point do they constitute fictionalisation and falsification? This workshop aims to discuss the possibilities and limitations associated with using new media for historical-political educational work.

(Workshop language: german)

Christoph Pallaske, University of Cologne
Hanna Huhtasaari, Federal Agency For Civic Education

Workshop 4 – Room: Friedrichshain, 4.OG
Collaboration and resistance in European post-war stories

Dealing with collaboration and resistance was a central question for many European countries during the period after the overthrow of National Socialist occupation. Resistance against German occupation was frequently stylised into heroism and attributed to society as a whole. Collaboration was individualised and punished to set an example. Another important factor in dealing with the question of collaboration and resistance is the need to address the controversial elements and to establish associations with current conflict situations.

(Workshop language: german)

Claudia Lenz, The European Wergeland Centre, Oslo

Workshop 5 – Room: Atrium IV & V, 1.OG
Education After Auschwitz – 2015

In his famous essay, “Education After Auschwitz”, German sociologist Theodor W. Adorno wrote: “the premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again.” In his view, Auschwitz was the relapse into barbarism “and barbarism continues as long as the fundamental conditions that favoured that relapse continue largely unchanged”.

What does Education after Auschwitz mean 70 years after the concentration camp was liberated?

(Workshop-language: german), with whispered interpretation

Astrid Messerschmidt, University of Education, Karlsruhe
Benedikt Widmaier, Haus am Maiberg, Heppenheim

Workshop 6 – Room: Kreuzberg, 3.OG

Open Space on methods in historical-political education on the subject of the post-war period

In a historical-political education context, the direct post-war period and developments after 1945 have an important bridging function between the history of National Socialism and the present day. Which methods of historical-political education can be used effectively here? This workshop should be conducted as an open space, with the topics and formats being brought in by participants rather than being defined beforehand. The subsequent working groups are not static but rather fluctuate depending on the discussion and the interest of the group.

(Workshop-language: german), sign language translation

Michele Barricelli, Leibniz University Hannover

Magdalena Scharf, Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste e.V.

1.00 p.m. Coffee break

1.30 p.m. **Closing lecture**
Europe in the Aftermath of World War II
Keith Lowe, Author, historian

Closing address

2.30 p.m. Snack

Simultaneous interpreters will be at hand to translate from English to German and German to English and a sign language translation will also be provided in the plenary. The individual workshops will be held in the language indicated in the programme above.