

Call for Papers

Between History und Politics: The Second World War in Museums in Western and Eastern Europe

Organization: Research Project "Muzealisation of Memory. The Second World War and Nazi-occupation in Museums, Memorials and Monuments in Eastern Europe" (Collegium Carolinum / Volkswagen Foundation)
Włodzimierz Borodziej, Étienne François, Ekaterina Keding,
Ekaterina Makhotina, Martin Schulze Wessel

Place: Historisches Kolleg / Collegium Carolinum, Munich
Date: 29.6.–1.7.2011
Deadline: 1.4.2011

Languages
of the Conference: German and English

The past decades have seen a remarkable increase of cultures of remembrance, amounting to a veritable "memory boom" that manifests itself in the opening of ever more museums, exhibitions and memorials that seek to commemorate especially violent episodes of history – above all the Second World War and the immediate post-war period.

Already shortly after 1945, museums and memorials of the Second World War became important media in the politics of history in many European countries. Those representations and sites of commemoration played and still play a significant role in shaping official discourse of commemoration; it is in this context that vital questions such as collective guilt and responsibility, as well as categories such as "enemy", "victim" and "perpetrator", were negotiated.

Visual representations of the Second World War, as well as social practices of commemoration, have significantly altered since the collapse of the Soviet Union, both in Eastern and Western Europe. In states of the former so called "Eastern Bloc", narratives about the war have become increasingly differentiated, a process, that is intimately linked to the attempts of these states and societies to establish a post-soviet, often anti-soviet, narrative. Meanwhile, in Western Europe narratives about the Second World War were re-examined as well and alternative cultures of commemoration of formerly marginalized groups were increasingly integrated, which led to new perspectives on questions such as "resistance" and "collaboration". This process must be viewed in the context of the end of the Cold War, the German reunification and the expansion of the European Union.

The international conference "Between History und Politics: The Second World War in Museums in Western and Eastern Europe" (Munich, 29. June–1. July 2011) focuses on strategies of representations of World War II in museums in Eastern and Western Europe and aims for a comparative perspective. Cognitive, aesthetic, as well as political

dimensions of narratives established by museum exhibitions shall be analysed: How are exhibits affected by the death of veterans and survivors of the war? What are the techniques of representation and what aesthetic forms are employed in examining the war in a "post-heroic" society? What is the role of religious semantics in representations of war? How has the attitude of visitors to historical museums and memorials changed since 1989 in European societies? The intention is to go beyond the analysis of different national cultures of remembrance and examine their trans-national entanglements.

Key topics to be discussed in the sections:

- Resistance / Collaboration / Partisan movements: visual display and political contextualisation
- "Leid-Motive": NS-violence and mass killings of civilian victims (in particular memorials dedicated to commemorate scorched villages): Dilemma to protect the dignity of the victims on the one hand and of emotional representation of the "omnipresent horrors of war" on the other.
- The role of religious semantics in contemporary historical exhibitions dedicated to commemorate WWII
- Hierarchy of victims and competition among groups of victims for recognition in the context of "multilayered" historical places / memorials with a "double past"
- National and European actors in the context of politics of history and their interrelation
- Challenges to national memory discourses by the global memory of the Holocaust

Historians and scholars from related fields such as cultural studies are invited to apply to this international conference. The conference is being organised by the research project "Muzealisation of memory. The Second World War and Nazi-occupation in Museums, Memorials and Monuments in Eastern Europe" which is located at Collegium Carolinum in Munich (www.collegium-carolinum.de) and sponsored by the Volkswagen Foundation. The conference will be held in German and English and will take place in Munich. It is intended to publish the papers presented. There will be no registration fee. The organizers will cover expenses for travelling and accommodation up to a limited amount.

Please send a 500 word abstract and a brief CV (5 publications max.) in a single Word document to: MuseumsWWII@extern.lrz-muenchen.de

Collegium Carolinum
Hochstr. 8
D-81669 Munich
Germany