



Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University

FOUNDED BY THEODORE ZEV AND ALICE R. WEISS

Call for Proposals for Participation in Seminars

Lessons and Legacies Conference on the Holocaust XV **The Holocaust: Global Perspectives and National Narratives**

1-4 November 2018

Washington University in St. Louis
St. Louis, Missouri, United States

The Fifteenth Biennial Lessons and Legacies Conference, sponsored by the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University and Washington University in St. Louis, invites scholars to submit proposals for participation in one of the six seminars listed below.

Seminars (new to L&L 2018) bring together a diverse group of scholars at various career levels for three meetings over the course of the conference for sustained discussion of a question or problem. Each seminar will choose 9-12 participants from among the submitted applications. Participants in each seminar will access a common syllabus of readings developed by the seminar convener(s) and submit position papers BEFORE the conference. Only those registered for the seminar will have access to the papers. Online access will be removed immediately after the conference.

To apply for one of the six seminars described below, please go to [the online form](#) and submit a paper proposal of no more than 300 words along with a paper title and a 1-2 page CV.

Participants will be determined by the respective seminar convener(s) in consultation with the conference co-chairs. All applicants will be informed in March 2018 regarding inclusion in the seminar. Seminar papers must be available to post by September 1, 2018.

To the extent possible, the Holocaust Educational Foundation of Northwestern University (HEF) provides financial assistance for graduate students with limited funds. We will consider other requests for funding on a case by case basis and pending availability.

Scholars and students who work and live in Europe should apply to the Center for Holocaust Studies (CHS-Munich) at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich.

Instructions on how to apply for support (from HEF and CHS-Munich) will be posted to the conference website alongside registration information in early March.

Co-chairs of the academic program:

Professor Jan Grabowski (University of Ottawa) and Professor Erin McGlothlin (Washington University in St. Louis)

Questions should be directed to hef@northwestern.edu.

Seminar 1: Framing the Holocaust: Suffering, Photography, and Spectatorship
Convener: Valerie Hebert (Lakehead University Orillia)

Photographs of atrocity have the power to provoke humanitarian responses, to instill a human rights consciousness, and to distill vast historical events into a single iconic image that enters our popular culture, operating as shorthand for otherwise inexpressible outrage. The term “Holocaust” brings particular images to mind: the little boy in the Warsaw Ghetto, arms raised in terrified surrender; a woman holding a child, her back turned against the point of a gun; the countless liberation photos which share a common pattern: emaciated bodies, living and dead, behind barbed wire, in cramped barracks, or in motionless and lifeless train cars. Such photographs of atrocity are also evidence of crime, a tangible artefact of persecution and violation. To perpetrators they serve as celebratory mementos and the victims as cruel reminders. As central as photographs are to our memory of modern historical events, they often inhabit an ambivalent intellectual space in our research, teaching, and larger public discourse. What separates the sincere desire to understand what photos can teach us from voyeuristic curiosity about their subjects? To view some of these images requires placing ourselves in the very position of the perpetrator who first took the image, without the victim’s consent, and at a moment of extreme distress. Does our consumption of photographs of atrocity risk replicating the original violence? Or, if we are to understand an event fully, are we obliged to engage with all the documents that recorded it, even the most disturbing visual sources? By what method do we read and interpret these unique primary sources? These are the kinds of questions that will structure discussion of the Lessons and Legacies XV Seminar: Framing the Holocaust: Suffering, Photography, and Spectatorship.

This seminar welcomes contributions on all aspects of Holocaust photography: secret and official photographs; photographs taken by and of perpetrators, victims, and onlookers; the use of photographs during the war and after, for documentation, propaganda, education, and memorialization; in a variety of venues, including books, museums, the internet, and the classroom. With a few notable exceptions (e.g. Zelizer, Liss, Struk, Hirsch, Didi-Huberman), the topic of Holocaust photography remains an under-developed area within a vibrant multi-disciplinary field of atrocity photography. Discussing the place of Holocaust photographs in research and education is also of key importance now. We find ourselves among a small and dwindling community of eyewitnesses to the Holocaust. In their absence, photographs may serve as substitute eyewitnesses. However, the “digital turn” has ensured the limitless worldwide distribution of these images, without corollary safeguards as to their authenticity, provenance, and rightful attribution. Misattribution risks erasing historical truth, proliferation risks exhausting the attention and consciences of the viewers. Thinking about how to incorporate Holocaust photographs in ongoing scholarship, pedagogy, and public discourse ethically and responsibly is of critical importance to the future of Holocaust studies. Moreover, situating questions about Holocaust photography within the larger scholarship on atrocity photography will substantiate the important connections between the Holocaust and other instances of genocide, war, violence and human rights violations, and ensure that Holocaust studies remain an enduring focus of academic inquiry.

Seminar 2: Global Post-war Experiences and Narratives in “Marginal” Sites: Latin America, Africa and Asia
Convener: Dr. Emmanuel Kahan (National University of La Plata / Argentine Council for Scientific and Technological Research)

The experiences of survivors during the post-war years, especially with regard to refugee camps, and migration and arrival in countries such as the United States, Canada or Israel constitute one of the central topics in the field of Holocaust studies. However, little is known about the experiences of survivors in other contexts. In this sense, the “marginal” condition of Holocaust survivors in Africa, Asia, and Latin America is not explained by their relatively smaller numbers in these regions but

instead by the scarcity of knowledge about them. Given that their experiences were qualitatively very different across geographies, their study is justified.

This seminar aims to expand the field of analysis about the arrival and reception of survivors in those latitudes. Approaching these experiences from a comparative perspective will allow us to identify possible similarities and differences with regard to the trajectories of survivors and the national societies that received them.

Participants in the seminar will present research papers on the experiences and narratives of Holocaust survivors regarding their migration, adaptation and incorporation. Themes that may be explored include the reasons for migrating to particular African, Asian, or Latin American settings, the type of networks that facilitated their migration, their first encounters and impressions upon arrival, and their integration patterns within a diverse range of political, social, and cultural contexts.

The seminar offers the possibility of incorporating different methodologies and perspectives such as oral history, archival research, qualitative analysis in the social sciences, and digital humanities. In this way, it encourages the exploration of possible crossroads and intersections among different fields of study.

**Seminar 3: More than Parcels: Wartime Relief and Aid for Jews in Nazi Europe
Conveners: Jan Láníček (University of New South Wales-Sydney), Gerald Steinacher (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), and Jan Lambertz (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)**

Welfare agencies, relatives, friends, and strangers sent a stream of relief aid to Jews trapped in Nazi camps and ghettos. Remittances of cash and shipments of medicine, clothing, and particularly food parcels played a critical if temporary role during World War II in maintaining morale and prolonging Jewish lives in all corners of the Nazi empire. Recent historiography has marginalized these relief efforts, instead focusing on a handful of activists who hid or led Jews to safety under perilous conditions, or the small pool of rescuers who made last-minute efforts to negotiate the release of camp prisoners. The new histories of the international humanitarian projects that grew out of the World War I likewise skip over the extensive aid endeavors that continued to reach across borders as a new world war engulfed Europe.

Our seminar will assess and map out the broad array of relief schemes organized by and for Jews during the Holocaust. It will focus particularly on the parcel schemes underwritten not only by the Red Cross and major Jewish advocacy groups, but by thousands of individuals on both sides of the Atlantic. We will consider the impact of aid from a range of methodological and geographical perspectives, working toward an integrated history of Jewish self-help and relief schemes across the Holocaust era.

No historical study has yet brought together the many fragmentary histories of such humanitarian aid under Nazi rule or considered its impact systematically. Did such transfers of goods and money affect ghetto and even camp economies? What could such transfers reveal to the outside world about Jewish life under Nazi terror, particularly about who was still alive and who had been killed? This project comes at a time when societies worldwide again face the quandary of how to respond to humanitarian crises and how best to support or rescue the victims of organized mass violence.

Seminar 4: Probing the Limits of Holocaust Memoir
Convener: Leslie Morris (University of Minnesota)

Using as a point of departure Saul Friedlander's 1992 volume *Probing the Limits of Representation*, this seminar will bring together a diverse group of scholars to think about how our family Holocaust histories intersect with our lives as academics. The goal of this seminar is to integrate our work as scholars of the Holocaust with our private lives in families that might include Holocaust survivors, perpetrators, or those who have been marked indelibly by historical trauma. There are complex and often unacknowledged motives for why we do the scholarship that we do. While there are often direct family histories that shape our scholarly lives, we will also explore how unexpected hybrid origins might serve as a point of departure.

There has been a great deal of critical attention lately to the affective mechanisms of memory making and the complex ways in which memory is remediated; one result of this has been renewed interest in critical forms of writing that cross over into personal narrative and memoir. This seminar will draw on this scholarship, including recent memoirs by well-known Holocaust scholars (Friedlander, among others), while also examining how family history has shaped, sometimes consciously and often unconsciously, our lives as academics. We will explore what has led us to engage with genealogies that are both connected to and seemingly unrelated to our work in Holocaust studies. What are some of the affective—both conscious and unconscious—mechanisms that drive our scholarly work? How can we reconstitute our academic lives so that the private is no longer absent, invisible, on the margins? And how does this help us to rethink what constitutes knowledge and scholarship in the first place?

We invite contributions that explore the fault lines between scholarship and memoir, including hybrid, crossover memoir. We hope to engage colleagues in a range of fields (not only History and literature) and from diverse backgrounds: not only children and grandchildren of survivors and perpetrators, but also scholars whose personal family relationship to the Holocaust might be more oblique or harder to delineate, but that nonetheless is present as a traumatic trace.

Seminar 5: Forgetting the Holocaust in the Era of Global Holocaust Remembrance
Conveners: Raz Segal (Stockton University) and Tom Lawson (Northumbria University)

This seminar will explore a paradoxical result of global Holocaust remembrance that, we argue, facilitates forgetting the Holocaust as history. The claim is not simply about the tension between history and memory. Rather, it addresses the fate of any history—eventually to be forgotten—only here concerning a particular history that, for the first time, has led to a global remembrance discourse that has been actively managed by a large number of national and international organizations. It is precisely this unique situation that has, paradoxically, accelerated the process of forgetting.

We are intrigued, for example, by how little high school graduates in Israel and the UK know about the history of the diverse set of events and processes that together we call the Holocaust; and as they know so little, they cannot, of course, even forget. We think it is urgent to understand how streets in cities across Ukraine are named after mass murderers of Jews during World War II (and others, especially non-Jewish Poles), while a new Holocaust museum in Kiev is in the planning stages. Or how two plenary meetings of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), a high-level international organization that deals with Holocaust education and remembrance, could take place in 2015 in Hungary, in Budapest and Debrecen, when Hungary served as the chair of the IHRA, while in Miskolc, the third-largest city in the country, the persecution and eviction of Roma from their houses, ongoing since 2012, continued in full swing. This is a particularly striking example, as it demonstrates the exclusionary limits of the international discourse on human rights, which Roma organizations routinely evoke, to no avail, and which is historically linked to World War II and the Holocaust, a history that included mass violence against Roma in Hungary. But this Hungarian history is actually

subject to forgetting rather than remembering, as Viktor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister, very recently (June 2017) showed when he referred to Miklós Horthy—the head of the Hungarian state during World War II and the mass murder of around half a million Hungarian Jews—as an “exceptional statesman.” There are many more examples, including current politics in the US.

The seminar will examine this paradox of forgetting the Holocaust in the era of global Holocaust remembrance from various perspectives and in diverse national and international contexts. The seminar conveners are keen to include participants from countries where this phenomenon is evident (Israel, UK, USA, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, South Africa, and Australia, for example) and are particularly interested in scholars who have worked closely with institutions responsible for the production of public Holocaust education and remembrance initiatives. We will inquire why and how it happens and whether common factors in different states account for this process. We will also explore contrary examples: expressions and products of Holocaust remembrance—in art, film, popular culture, politics, and education—that forefront the historical complexities of this case of genocide, and we will assess, therefore, the extent of this phenomenon and possible ways to confront it.

Seminar 6: From Stigmatization to Mass Murder: Disability in Central Europe
Conveners: Warren Rosenblum (Webster University) and Patricia Heberer Rice (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

This seminar will explore the experience of disability in Central Europe from the era of mass institutionalization and segregation through the period of sterilization and murder under the Nazis. The aim is to broaden and enrich our understanding of how persons with disabilities were stripped of their social and political status and subject to a spiraling set of persecutory measures. Participants will submit position papers on an array of historical, literary, and theoretical topics, spanning as much as possible the geographical and temporal limits of modern Central Europe. Common readings will address cultural constructions of disability, the evolution of state policy toward persons with mental and physical disabilities, and the role of doctors and nurses, educators and caregivers, families and clergy in facilitating and/or resisting the apparatus of persecution.

The seminar will make a vital contribution to a still-emerging field of study. While brilliant work has appeared on the scientific origins of the Nazi euthanasia program, there is little scholarship that rigorously analyzes the Nazi treatment of the disabled within broader cultural, social, and political contexts. Disability studies has been relatively slow to take root in the historiography of Central Europe, leaving us with gaps in our understanding of the longer-term process of stigmatization and segregation of this population. Very few works on disability transcend standard epochal and national boundaries in Central Europe. This seminar will help emerging and established scholars think beyond narrow frames of reference, offering methodological variety, geographical comparisons, and a better awareness of continuity and change over time. For this reason, we encourage proposals on a variety of topics related to disability.