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# Gedenkstätten Rundbrief

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# 25th Anniversary of the Memorial Museums Department

WELCOME SPEECH



**Andreas Nachama**

In July last year we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Topography of Terror. Now, on 1 February 2018, we have another event to celebrate: the 25th anniversary of the Memorial Museums Department at the Topography of Terror Foundation.

The Memorial Museums Department has its own special character. A few months after the Topography of Terror Foundation was established, Franz von Hammerstein, the chairman of the board of trustees of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARSP), approached us. Von Hammerstein explained that the ARSP had encountered financial difficulties when unifying its branches in East and West Germany, and suggested that we take over responsibility for the Memorial Museums Department, which had already existed for 10 years. This was an interesting idea that we eventually implemented in spring 1993. At the time, Franz von Hammerstein was closely involved with both institutions. He was one of the early supporters of the Topography of Terror project and a member of the expert commission under the chairmanship of Reinhard Rürup that had submitted a plan for a permanent Topography of Terror educational site in 1990. Von Hammerstein was a co-founder the ARSP in 1958 and had served as its secretary-general for ten years. The advantages of this transfer were obvious: the Memorial Museums Department published a journal that offered the Foundation a proven means of communication. In addition, with an exhibition that was based on a specific historical site, the Topography of Terror was able to perform tasks beyond the local level and carry out work in the field of national memorial culture. Later it expanded this work to the international level as well.

Reinhard Rürup, the former scholarly director of the Foundation, expressed this in *Netzwerk der Erinnerung* (Network of Remembrance) a booklet published to mark the tenth anniversary of the Memorial Museums Department. In light of the fact that the Topography of Terror was not a memorial centre in the usual sense, but a site of the perpetrators, he wrote, "It may seem surprising at first glance that the founda-

tion is nevertheless the only institution in Germany that has had a nationally active Memorial Museums Department for the past ten years. ... But we barely hesitated with the decision... The work that the Department had done so far had been meaningful and important, and as an institution in the German capital that deals with the history of the Nazis' reign of terror in its entirety, the Foundation was prepared to take on responsibility for wider areas."<sup>1</sup>

The Memorial Museums Department began as a one-man operation under Thomas Lutz. Including his time at ARSP, Thomas Lutz has now worked at the department for 35 years, contributing his knowledge, contacts and practical experience. We would like to express our appreciation for his contribution today and our heartfelt gratitude for the continuing success of his work and his great dedication.

Over the years the Memorial Museums Department has been able to expand its staff and employ Michaela Illner on a part-time basis. In addition, twelve participants from the Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service and four young people who elected to spend a voluntary social service year at the Topography of Terror have worked in the Department. They have been primarily responsible for maintaining the online site of the Gedenkstättenforum (Memorial Museums Forum) and the daily selection of press articles. Our special thanks to all of you.

Let me now turn to the main fields of work in which the Memorial Museums Department is active. In describing them, I want to show that the Department is not only an important part of the Foundation, but to some extent pursues its own activities as well.

In the decentralised landscape of memorials in Germany, the Memorial Museums Department serves as a central information and coordination office for memorial centres and places of remembrance. In addition, it is involved in a variety of consultancy activities in Germany and abroad. It offers input on the establishment of new memorial museums and the development of existing ones, and acts in an advisory function for the federal and state governments. It provides consultancy services for new exhibitions in a variety of other countries and for the international projects run by UNESCO, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and the International Holocaust Remembrance Association, in which Thomas Lutz has served as the German delegate for over fifteen years. In addition to the regularly published Gedenkstättenrundbrief, another important communication channel is the above-mentioned online forum with its daily selection of press articles. Finally, the department organises memorial seminars across Germany, as well as international conferences and seminars.

The Memorial Museums Department has made an essential contribution to shaping the national and international reputation of the Topography of Terror Foundation. Its excellent contacts made it possible, for example, to acquire the loan of the glass booth in which Adolf Eichmann was seated during his trial in Jerusalem for display in a special exhibition at the Topography of Terror in 2011. This was the first time the booth was exhibited outside Israel.

**Professor Andreas Nachama** is the director of the Topography of Terror Foundation.

1 Netzwerk der Erinnerung: 10 Jahre Gedenkstättenreferat der Stiftung Topographie des Terrors; Eine Veröffentlichung der Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, ed. Reinhard Rürup. Berlin 2003, p. 8.



**Klaus Lederer**

On 5 July last year, I gave a talk at the Topography of Terror on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the foundation and the institution. At the time, I explained that with annual visitor numbers topping one million for years, the Topography of Terror had become a cornerstone of cultural learning in Berlin and all of Germany. But its history extends even further back in time. Among the many groups that literally began digging here, at the site of the perpetrators, in May 1985, were “Aktives Museum Faschismus und Widerstand in Berlin” (“Active Museum and Resistance”), an association founded in the 1980s, and “Initiative zum Umgang mit dem Gestapo-Gelände” (Initiative for dealing with the Gestapo site”), which had emerged somewhat later. What they all shared was their commitment to establishing a permanent place of learning here.

The Topography of Terror is much more than just a place – it is a mission. This mission is to ensure, at the historical site and beyond, that present-day memorial work has a sound scholarly basis. For this reason, the main goal cannot be perpetual trudging through a “vale of tears” – even if presentations of the crimes committed by the Nazis are concerned with incredible atrocities and the immense suffering of countless groups of victims. We must continually face up to our mission of providing progressive exhibitions and educational work. The Memorial Museums Department at the Topography of Terror makes an important contribution to achieving this goal. Throughout Germany it supports memorial work and remembrance that goes beyond mourning. For twenty-five years, the department has stood for critical examination of the history of the Nazi dictatorship, always focusing on topical questions and challenges.

Let me take a brief look at some of the most important stages in the history of the Topography of Terror. I have already mentioned its early roots. In 1992, following the peaceful changes in the GDR in 1989–1990 and the decision to make Berlin the capital of Germany once again, the Topography of Terror – originally a civic action project in West Berlin – was established by the state of Berlin initially as a dependent foundation under public law. One year later, in 1993, there were two important developments: Berlin held a competition for a new Topography of Terror Documentation Centre, and

Berlin's Deputy Mayor and Senator for Culture and Europe, Klaus Lederer, during his opening address in the auditorium of the Topography of Terror Foundation



the Foundation Council, chaired by Berlin's senator of culture, agreed to incorporate the Memorial Museums Department – formerly part of Action Reconciliation Service for Peace – into the newly established Foundation. Berlin showed that it was willing to take responsibility for a national task of this kind – and I am extremely proud of this. The memorial work enabled Berlin to have an impact throughout Germany. A year later, in 1994, the federal government agreed jointly to fund the Topography of Terror, and has done so ever since.

The 25th anniversary of the Memorial Museums Department at the Topography of Terror Foundation is an ideal occasion to pay tribute to the Foundation's successful and vital work. As I mentioned above, in 1993 the Topography of Terror was still under development. Its two directors at that time, Professor Reinhard Rürup and Professor Andreas Nachama, must be congratulated for their foresight in incorporating the Memorial Museums Department into the emergent foundation. The decision was the right one – that much is clear today. Over time, the Memorial Museums Department at the Topography of Terror Foundation has proved to be an effective counterpoint to the decentralised landscape of memorial centres in Germany. It is important that Germany has a large number of memorial centres that differ in terms of their historical contexts and geographical distribution. The Memorial Museums Department has demonstrated that it is the right organisation to coordinate this network and by doing so, to support the strengths of the individual institutions within the overall framework.

This is clearly due to the thematic focus of the Topography of Terror Documentation Center, which deals with all the various aspects of the history of Nazi crimes and thus differs from the individual memorial centres. The decision to take charge of the Memorial Museums Department has proved successful in another respect as well. With the increase in international collaboration in a variety of fields – including research into Nazi crimes, the structuring of new memorial centres and the development of educational work – a growing number of inquiries are also reaching the Memorial

Museums Department from foreign countries. In other words, the Memorial Museums Department has proved it can be both a nationally effective node in the network of memorial museums in Germany and a centre of expertise for national and international consulting activities. This is particularly important given current developments in Germany, with growing right-wing populism and the rise of the Alternative for Germany as a nationwide parliamentary party. The Topography of Terror Foundation provides the Memorial Museums Department with an ideal basis for its work in every respect.

And the Topography of Terror Foundation has enhanced its reputation in Germany and abroad by taking over the Memorial Museums Department 25 years ago and developing it as a leading institution. We can conclude by hoping that the work in this acknowledged form will continue to be the backbone of the decentralised structure of memorial centres in Germany. In this it has the full support of the State of Berlin and the federal government. There can be no end to our efforts to come to terms with the Nazis' reign of terror. However, we will need to find adequate strategies for the memorial centres in response to the changing ways in which people examine and discuss Nazi history. I am certain that, as a coordinating force and a source of ideas, the Memorial Museums Department will play a central, if not centralising, role.

I wish to congratulate you on your 25th anniversary and thank you for your work. I am confident that our paths will cross again frequently in the future, because I regard coming to terms with the past – as well as commemoration and remembrance – as a matter of great importance – and because I know you will always be at hand to support me in this.

**Dr. Klaus Lederer** is Berlin's Deputy Mayor and the Senator for Culture and Europe.



**Maria Bering**

Thank you very much for the invitation to the ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the Memorial Museums Department of the Topography of Terror. I would like to begin by conveying heartfelt greetings to you from the minister of state, Monika Grütters. The minister of state already expressed her great appreciation for the work done by the Memorial Museums Department and for its many years of dedicated service on the occasion of the Topography of Terror's 30th anniversary last July.

The Topography of Terror, which has been funded by the federal government since 1994, has made a particularly valuable contribution to researching the Nazi crimes and communicating their meaning. It is located here, in the heart of Berlin, the former site of the headquarters of the Gestapo, the SS leadership and the Reich Main Security Office, where they systematically planned and organised their reign of terror and death in Europe. The Topography of Terror has brought history to life by developing this authentic site with great expertise, sensitivity and resourcefulness, and making it publicly accessible.

In doing so, the Topography of Terror has vividly and memorably introduced the structures and mechanisms of the Nazi dictatorship to millions of visitors of all ages from Germany and abroad. The presentation of a wide range of topics directly linked to the historical surroundings makes a visit to the exhibition an impressive and unforgettable experience. The permanent display is complemented by numerous special exhibitions, all well attended, and quality lecture and discussion events. In other words, the Topography of Terror sets standards as a place of remembrance.

Here, however, I would like to focus on an aspect of the Topography of Terror that receives less public attention than the documentation work I have just mentioned. This aspect is crucially important for the network of memorial centres in Germany – it has had a lasting effect on the network and will continue to shape it in the future. I am referring to the Memorial Museums Department under the auspices of the Topography of Terror. Germany has a very diverse landscape of memorial centres and places of remembrance related to the Nazi period, for good reasons. The individual institutions

have different thematic focuses, based on their various functions during the Nazi reign of terror. As a result, they perform different tasks in the process of examining and commemorating the past.

The memorial centres and places of remembrance related to the Nazi period are spread across Germany and have widely varying environments. In places like the German-Danish border they have a rural character or, as in Dachau, they are located in the middle of cities. Moreover, they are supported by different funding bodies including the federal government, the Federal German states, local authorities, churches, or private citizens. All kinds of hybrid forms exist.

In the Federal Strategy for Memorial Museums, civic support from mainstream society is seen as an integral part of this historically evolved memorial culture. It was active civic engagement that first created awareness that commemoration is an important social task. Civic engagement also means constantly questioning history. In this respect it is an essential basis alongside state support.

In many cases, civic engagement plays an important role as a driving force, generator of ideas and promoter of unconventional thinking. In addition, continuing civic participation at the local level contributes significantly to the success of projects and proposals, including for publicly funded memorial centres and sites of remembrance. While the Topography of Terror is a good example of successful, productive interaction between the state and citizen participation, its significance goes far beyond this. Its Memorial Museums Department has established it as a central and competent address for civic initiatives.

The Memorial Museums Department has played a key role in the above-mentioned heterogeneous landscape of memorial centres and places of remembrance in Germany connected with the Nazi period. This historically evolved heterogeneity is productive and should definitely be preserved and strengthened. However, it also poses a number of challenges, because duplicate structures may develop, knowledge may be lost, and relevant information such as funding opportunities may be missed, and some centres may lack information on important contacts. It is therefore very important for the memorial centres and places of remembrance to be closely interconnected. This allows knowledge to be shared and interests to be bundled and channelled. With its Memorial Museums Department, the Topography of Terror acts as a seismograph for the memorial centre network and, as such, is also an important contact for government and political leaders in Germany and abroad.

I would like to highlight just a few examples of the varied activities of the Memorial Museums Department: A panel of experts advises the minister of state, Monika Grütters, on decisions about federal funding for projects related to the Nazi period. The Memorial Museums Department is one of the institutions named in the Federal Strategy for Memorial Museums that appoints a representative to this panel. The annual national conference for memorial museums and the memorial museum seminar have established themselves as permanent fixtures in the landscape of memorial centres in Germany. The staff of large and small memorial centres value these events as unique opportunities to make contacts, obtain advice, form opinions and take part in further education programmes.

The Gedenkstättenrundbrief (Memorial Museums Newsletter) published by the Memorial Museums Department, is also a vital contribution. As a professional journal

that addresses the highly specific needs of memorial centre work, it keeps its readers up to date on the latest research and experiences.

These exchange platforms are particularly important because the memorial centres and sites of remembrance related to the Nazi period are facing immense challenges today and need to redefine their work to some extent. Fortunately, visitor numbers are growing. In 2017, for example, the Topography of Terror attracted 1.3 million visitors – a very impressive number. At the same time, the composition of visitor groups is becoming increasingly heterogeneous and visitors' cultural backgrounds are more diverse than ever. Because of the growing distance in time to Nazi Germany, diminishing numbers of witnesses are able to give direct reports on the events of that period, and fewer visitors – for example, relatives of people involved – have direct biographical connections to the topic or the historical site. We also hear on a regular basis from memorial centre staff that visiting school classes have diminishing historical knowledge and that the visits are frequently poorly prepared.

Small and large memorial centres can meet these challenges more easily if they can exchange experiences and learn from one another. For example, the promising strategy of reinforcing and improving educational programmes can achieve its full potential only if resources are shared and those involved in the memorial centres are able to discuss and experiment with new concepts and ideas, and share experiences. In this way, innovative concepts and approaches can develop a successful dynamic over a wide area. As a central point in the memorial centre network, the Memorial Museums Department is indispensable for achieving such symbioses in memorial work.

Against this backdrop, the federal government has a vested interest in a strong Memorial Museums Department. In an efficient, professional manner, the department helps Germany to assume its historical responsibility in commemorating the victims, researching and examining the Nazi crimes and communicating humane, democratic values in the country's decentralised and pluralistic network of memorial centres and sites of remembrance connected with the Nazi era.

We will continue gladly and with conviction to work towards strengthening the Memorial Museums Department and expanding the communications work. Following the successful work of the past 25 years – for which, on behalf of the minister of state, Monika Grütters, I would like extend my sincere thanks (especially to you, Dr. Lutz) – I wish the Memorial Museums Department all the best for the next 25 years.

**Maria Bering** heads the group “History, Remembrance” in the office of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

# The Development of Memorial Museums in Germany and their Network. Review and Perspectives



**Detlef Garbe**

The 25-year jubilee of the Memorial Museums Department of the Topography of Terror Foundation provides a good opportunity to review the development of the memorial sites that commemorate the crimes of Nazism in Germany, and to take a timely look ahead. This is all the more necessary today because many things that seemed certain have become fragile, and the memorial museums are facing major challenges. On the one hand, politicians and the public increasingly expect these museums to achieve important goals in areas like educating for democracy, promoting integration and preventing anti-Semitism. On the other hand, they are encountering political challenges and fundamental questioning of a kind that has not occurred since the reunification of Germany in 1990.

For a full review we have to go back beyond the year 1993. The Memorial Museums Department has a prehistory that dates back at least as far as the beginning of the 1980s, when a new phase of the process in Germany called “coming to terms with the past” began as part of a generational change. This concept, which was current at that time, implied that one day it would be possible to finish with the criminal legacies of Nazism, finally to “overcome” them at some future date. At the same time, interest turned towards the actual sites and the victims of Nazi crimes, breaking with the cover-up attitude that had defined the postwar decades and moving towards revelation and exposure. Examples of the rupture in consciousness from 1979 to 1984 include the shock caused by the screening of the American TV series “Holocaust” in 1979 about the persecution and fate of the Weiss family, who were Jewish, contrasted with the German perpetrators, the Dorf family; the school competitions for the prize sponsored by the Federal German president; and the emergence of history workshops. The historian Detlef Siegfried has characterised these five years as the period with the highest level of popular mobilisation in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.

In many places, initiatives organised by youth federations and church and trade union groups began putting up commemorative signs at former Nazi prison camp sites or in similarly significant places. The documentation that emerged in such contexts, which described forgotten camps on people's doorsteps, first reawakened people to the fact that during the war Germany was covered in a network of concentration camps and forced labour camps. At the actual sites it was important back then to overcome fierce resistance among the local population and engage in conflicts, often for years, with local community and government bodies.

As individual memorial centre initiatives began to express the wish to exchange information and coordinate their activities throughout Germany, the association Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste e.V. (Action Reconciliation Service for Peace – ARSP), which had worked with volunteers in Auschwitz and other memorial sites outside Germany assumed responsibility for this. On the weekend of 17–18 October 1981 in Hamburg, at the sidelines of the opening of the documentation centre at Neuengamme, there was an initial meeting of activists from Berlin, Dachau, the Emsland area, Essen, Moringen, Ulm, and the Wewelsburg area. The meeting came up with the idea of producing a book about the “forgotten concentration camps”,<sup>1</sup> about repressing the past and the resistance in society against the memorial centre work that was gradually developing. It also arranged for regular meetings in the future.

The memorial centres and their objectives increasingly drew public attention. The second meeting of the memorial centre initiatives that took place in Dachau from 21 to 23 May 1982 had already gained the support of the Federal Agency for Civic Education. The following year, the mayor of Hanover, Herbert Schmalstieg, was present to greet the participants arriving at Hanover Town Hall from all parts of West Germany – a sign of the growing importance of memorial centre work.

A crucially important moment for the networking of the memorial centres was the establishment of a central coordination post at ARSP. The first incumbent, from the beginning of 1983, was the vicar Thomas Vogel, who was succeeded in 1983 by the teacher Thomas Lutz, then aged 27. After studying history, politics and sport in Marburg, Lutz had chosen civilian service for the ARSP as an alternative to military service, and had hosted visitor groups in Auschwitz Memorial Centre. After his second state examination he set to work in the Berlin ARSP office, building up the Memorial Museums Department. He has now coordinated the cooperation between the Federal German memorial centres for over 33 years, organising conferences and advanced education programmes for them, supporting their projects and increasingly representing them abroad, in neighbouring European countries, in Israel and the USA, and worldwide.

This was all completely unforeseeable in the mid-1980s. Although there is no space here to present the varied history of the memorial centres, we shall briefly outline how the former sites of persecution were dealt with in the previous decades. By the 1950s there was hardly any continuing public interest in the numerous memorials, which had usually been created on the initiative of former victims of persecution under the auspices of the Allied military forces at locations of camps and sites of imprisonment and murder, and the memorials created in many cities to commemorate the victims of the Nazi terror regime. Remembrance from the 1950s onwards was dominated by memorials for the victims of aerial bombing, the returnees from the war and the people expelled from central and Eastern Europe. The original sites were forgotten,



The audience listening to Detlef Garbe's lecture. Front row, from left to right: Andreas Nachama, Maria Bering, Klaus Lederer, Thomas Lutz, Uwe Bergmeier

often because they were later used for other purposes. It is commonly known that not only the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union (NKVD) used the former Nazi concentration camps at Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen as special camps, but also that the Western allies used the former concentrations camps of Dachau, Esterwegen and Neuengamme as internment camps. To begin with, after the war the grounds of former sites of Nazi terror in the Federal Republic were often used for accommodating refugees and expellees before being converted for use as prisons, police academies and military institutions.

From 1958 to 1961 the German Democratic Republic (East Germany – GDR) established national memorial centres in Buchenwald, Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen– not least for reasons of self-legitimation as shrines of “the anti-fascist legacy”. It was only then that West Germany also created memorial centres with exhibitions at concentration camps, for example in Dachau in 1965 and in Bergen-Belsen in 1966.

The above-mentioned change that began in the early 1980s in the discussion of how to deal with the sites of Nazi crimes led during that decade to the opening of a whole series of memorial sites complete with exhibitions and accompanying educational programmes. This was further reinforced in reunified Germany in the 1990s, contradicting the initial worries of the victims' associations both within and outside Germany that the memorial centres would now be disbanded. In the unification process the question arose of the continued maintenance of the central memorial sites that had been ideologically co-opted in the GDR. Political interest started to focus on this at the beginning of the 1990s due to media reports on the use of Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen as Soviet special camps after the war, and the discovery in the camps of the graves of prisoners who had starved to death there after 1945 under the jurisdiction of the Soviet secret service, the NKVD.

From that time on, as new concepts were developed and new memorial centres were established to commemorate the injustices of the East German regime led by the Socialist Unity Party (SED), there was growing awareness that the German nation as a whole should bear responsibility for the memorial centres that commemorated the

Nazi crimes. For the first time these centres, provided they were recognised as being important for the entire nation, were co-funded by the German government. Memorial centres with exhibitions and permanent information programmes were set up in many regions and municipalities with support from federal German states. All these foundations were accompanied by strong civic participation.

At the same time, questions about the self-image of united Germany and the lessons from the experience of two different dictatorships reinforced interest in the memorial centres. The increased social consensus, the rising visitor numbers and the support from public funds led to a professionalisation of the memorial centres which were now gradually able to begin developing into museums of contemporary history and modern educational centres. In barely more than a decade they moved from the periphery into the centre of policy about history.<sup>2</sup>

During this period of conflicts over interpretation in relation to identity politics and the development of a memorial culture for Germany as a whole, in March 1993 the Topography of Terror Foundation took over the management of the Memorial Museums Department from the ARSP. After ten years and the strain of unifying the East and West German sections of the organisation, the ARSP could no longer cope financially with this additional task.

According to the then director of the Foundation, this decision “was linked to considerable expansion in the range of assignments of the Topography of Terror Foundation.”<sup>3</sup> The vacant post of a research assistant for press and public relations work was filled by Thomas Lutz. For the Memorial Museums Department, which has been reinforced over the years with a position for a specialist worker, a budget for fees and the input of volunteers from the FSJ, the voluntary social service year in the field of culture, being part of the Foundation meant a share in its scholarly expertise and a big boost to its professionalism.

The Topography of Terror is a documentation centre that provides information about the SS terror that originated at that location and spread throughout Germany and the parts of Europe occupied by the Wehrmacht. The institutionalisation of the memorial centre coordination and the related public impact clearly brought great benefits for this documentation centre. In my opinion, there can be no argument about an institution that is jointly funded by the central government and the federal state of Berlin assuming responsibility for an overlapping task that benefits all of the memorial centres and memorial museum initiatives in Germany.

The Memorial Museum Department has long been a universally recognised port of call for advice and information for memorial centres and initiatives, municipalities and the Federal states, and for the media, politics and research. The department fulfils its coordinating function very efficiently in a variety of ways. Thomas Lutz inherited a newsletter that was introduced by his predecessor in 1983 as a collection of duplicated pages. Meanwhile Lutz has developed the Memorial Centre Newsletter into a widely distributed specialist journal that is well respected beyond the memorial centres. Originally published every two months, later quarterly, the journal's issues have been professionally designed since 1997 and provide more topical input than the specialist periodicals for historical sciences and historical education in this thematic field, most of which appear annually. At the same time the size of the issues allows scope for specialist contributions and practical information on new exhibitions and



Tour of the site of the T4 clinic in Brandenburg, a site of Nazi "euthanasia" killings, during the conference "Archaeology and Memory. Sites of Nazi camps. Research-Preserve-Educate", 2015

publications, events and conferences. In May 2001 the 100th edition of the Memorial Centre Newsletter appeared as a jubilee issue with highly controversial articles on specification of memorial centre locations. Now it is almost time for the 200th edition.

In 1999 the Memorial Centre Forum began as an interactive platform with a practical and topical press review, notices of events and literature, information on research projects, and contributions to discussion, although the latter are regrettably not as strong as may be desired on this platform.

The conferences organised through the Department, and often held in cooperation with other educational organisations, are a core element for exchanging experiences and for further education. The memorial centre seminars are still held today at different venues and with different approaches to various topics. Specialist conferences for specific groups and international seminars and symposia are also part of this picture.

The annual memorial centre conferences held since 2012 are mainly for the delegates who represent the FORUM of the German federal states' working groups of memorial centres, memorial sites and initiatives, the head offices of the Federal Agency for Civic Education and the Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials in Germany in the different federal states. Their purpose is to serve the debate about the future development of commemorative sites in the context of present-day challenges. The FORUM of the Federal States' Working Groups presently comprises 265 memorial centres and sites of remembrance maintained by full-time staff and volunteers.<sup>4</sup>

The Memorial Centre Conference is consequently particularly important because in some respects it substitutes for the joint organisation of all the memorial centres for the victims of Nazism in Germany, which is still lacking today.

When the Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials in Germany was founded twenty years ago, Thomas Lutz assumed the role of its managing director. The group covers the eight memorial centres Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Dachau, Flossenbürg, Mittelbau-Dora, Neuengamme, Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen, which are jointly funded by the federal state where they are situated and by the German government. The Working Group brings together their management representatives,

who have formed a close cooperative network, organise common projects on occasions, and promote exchange between working groups in the field of memorial centre archives, libraries and educational work. With its numerous initiatives and contacts in the political sphere, the Working Group is involved in developing the memorial centre landscape in Germany. In doing so, however, it does not see itself as a lobby group for its own interests but as an advocate for strengthening the smaller institutions and initiatives that are essential for the decentralised structure.

The great esteem awarded to the work of the Memorial Museum Department is shown by the fact that the German parliament, the Bundestag, stipulated in its resolution of November 2008 for continuation of the memorial centre conception that a representative of the Memorial Museum Department should be part of the expert body that gives recommendations on the suitability of projects for funding to the Federal Government commissioner for culture and the media. Above and beyond this function, Dr. Lutz occupies numerous positions in expert commissions and on advisory boards. He is also the long-serving chairman of the International Advisory Committee of the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation.

In addition, the expertise of the Memorial Museums Department is increasingly in demand internationally. Aside from lectures and expert reports or statements, this includes, for example, collaboration on competitions for the design of exhibitions, monuments and memorial centres. The Department is a co-founder of the specialist section on memorials in the International Council of Museums (Icom) and held the post of vice-president for six years at the head of the International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes (IC Memo), which includes museums concerned with different crimes of regimes around the world. Since 2000 the Department has been appointed as a delegate of the German Foreign Ministry in the organisation known today as the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (Ihra), in which over 30 nations now cooperate.

For many international partners, the Memorial Museums Department of the Topography of Terror Foundation is something like an ambassador of Germany's memorial centres. At the Department's tenth anniversary, Wesley A. Fisher, a long-serving member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC acknowledged his appreciation by saying that in the quest for a key contact partner only the Memorial Museums Department had fulfilled the qualifications for a central professional organisation for Holocaust matters in Germany.<sup>5</sup> This was the American view. It reveals another advantage of the allocation of the Memorial Museums Department to the Topography of Terror Foundation: it demonstrated in an international context that after the dominance of the Holocaust, the Shoah, the other mass crimes committed by the Nazis should not be marginalised.

The catalogue of activities underlines the key importance of networked coordination, particularly in Germany with its highly differentiated and valuable decentralised structure of educational sites that are usually located directly at the historical sites of the Nazi crimes. Unlike in other countries such as the USA, Israel, Poland and France, there is no central national institution in Germany that prescribes the narrative of remembrance and the historical picture.

In Germany a largely pluralistic and cosmopolitan society has evolved through civic commitment, the unification process, immigration and international networks. In



Tour of the permanent exhibition of the Topography of Terror Foundation during the 57th nationwide memorial museums seminar, "Don't Forget and Don't Repeat – Present-Day Relevance in Memorial Museums Work", 2012

particular, the self-critical approach to the Nazi past testifies to a mature democratic fabric and a new kind of sincerity. As the then president of Germany, Joachim Gauck, said in a speech on 27 January 2015, "there is no German identity without Auschwitz."<sup>6</sup> There is no doubt that acknowledging the guilt of Nazi Germany has become an established part of Germany's self-conception, because it is the only way the nation can live self-confidently with its historical crimes from its own perspective and on the world stage. The former Bundestag president Norbert Lammert summed this up in a speech in 2013: "This memorial culture is an indispensable precondition for re-establishing Germany's reputation in the world. It is a condition for a defeated, politically lost and morally discredited nation ... to be able to walk tall again."<sup>7</sup>

Given the increasingly urgent challenges facing us today, there is a need to reinforce the memorial centre network that has now developed, not least as a result of the German government's concept for memorial centres. The guidelines it developed in the 1990s, with their emphasis on the shared responsibility of central government, the different federal states and local authorities, on scholarly expertise and on defining the relationship between the Nazi genocide and the crimes of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), together with the creation of international advisory committees for the victims, support the decentralisation and independence of the memorial centres.

The development of memorial centres in the years following the reunification of Germany seems like a success story. Meanwhile more than 300 memorial centres in all the big cities and almost everywhere across the country provide information about the crimes of the Nazi regime. The number of visitors to memorial centres is growing, and has reached over five million annually. Nonetheless, the memorial centres are facing difficult times.

It is precisely the real or presumed success in relation to Germany's troubled historical legacy that has fostered the conclusion that everything has been done in this area that needed to be done. Regardless of concrete problems such as the physical preservation of buildings, the memorial centres for the victims of Nazism are seen as being at saturation point, and the history as thoroughly researched. It is thanks only to

parliamentary criticism of the cancellation of group visits due to resource shortfalls for visitor facilities that funds were finally increased for educational work in the memorial centres in the last two years.

Nowadays there are scarcely any remaining witnesses who can describe the Nazi crimes from their own personal experience. This increases the responsibility of the memorial centres as visible testimonies for preserving the memory of the injustices committed in the Nazi era. Just because the survivors will fall silent, the memorial centres should not become silent edifices reserved for remembrance only on particular occasions. In fact, they should remain exceptionable, they should encourage people to speak out rather than keep silent, and they should raise important questions.

Other major challenges include:

- the growing distance in time since the Nazi period
- the fading out of the generation that examined the Nazi crimes in a way that was often motivated by a sense of shame about their parents' silence, and its replacement by more uninhibited, less biographically influenced approaches
- the rapidly changing possibilities of access to audiences – not just young people – in the digital world
- the challenges of an increasingly multi-ethnic society with different background experiences and refugee narratives that are not influenced by the events of the Second World War
- the growth of anti-Semitism emanating from the midst of society as well as through refugees who flee to Germany from civil war and persecution, many of whom have grown up in surroundings characterised by hatred of Israel and the Jews.

In this situation the memorial centres are being confronted with the expectation of making greater contributions to integration and stabilising the culture of democratic values.

In relation to the expectations placed on memorial centres, I would like to take this opportunity briefly to discuss the issue of compulsory school visits to concentration camp memorials. In my opinion this is a pseudo-debate because visits by school classes as part of the appropriate curricula are naturally desirable and educationally necessary. However, relevant recommendations for excursions outside school that are embedded in the teaching already exist in the timetables and curricula in many federal states in Germany. It makes sense educationally, of course, not to run crash courses but to organise project days with qualified guidance in which school students are not just lectured on guided tours but offered an integrated approach, wherever possible incorporating interactive elements, participation with the students doing their own enquiries in tasks designed for their particular interests, and above all, discussion phases. It is obviously necessary to create the preconditions for this both in the school context and in the memorial centres. Today, many memorial centres, especially the ones with large visitor numbers, are already unable to meet the present demand. To give just one example: at Neuengamme concentration camp memorial we offer a variety of programmes depending on age, type of school or training scheme, and languages, to over 2,000 accompanied groups annually. We have now reached the limits of our present staff capacity. We simply lack the resources to do more.

The pedagogical criticism voiced in the debate, including from memorial centre circles, concentrated on the fixed idea of compulsory visits that are credited with

achieving a near-cathartic effect by showing the Nazi crimes clearly and vividly. Particularly because school by its very nature has the character of a duty, there is no point in forcing anyone. We can see this from the experience of the GDR, where prescribed anti-fascism actually had the opposite effect. When school students and teachers have the impression that a certain attitude is required of them, they close up and develop internal resistance. Yet for learning experiences and emotional accessibility we need students with open minds and hearts who are not afraid to ask questions of anyone.

Changes in the political field of reference that always have a bearing on the work in the memorial centres are also conditioned by the increasingly threatening situations in recent years, military conflicts and global crises that affect us directly in the form of social distortions or terrorist threats. In periods when autocrats propagate the self-interest of nation states and isolation and rearmament in both domestic and foreign affairs, many people ask themselves whether the social roots of democratic achievements, the institutional safety mechanisms of the constitutional state and the international blueprint for lasting peace are strong enough. The memorial centres are increasingly hearing from survivors of Nazi terror, who are now very old, and their relatives, asking how far the lessons from the historical experience of Nazism can apply now.

The past decades have seen a difficult process of establishing memorial culture across Germany on a firm basis and gaining social understanding for this. Today, in a situation of growing uncertainty, these achievements are being fundamentally challenged by the growth and strengthening of right-wing populism. Once again we are hearing declarations that “we no longer have to be reproached for those twelve years”, and there are public calls for “an about-turn in memorial policy”. The speech of Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker on 8 May 1985 on the liberation from Nazism is stigmatised as “a speech against his own nation” and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is lambasted as a “symbol of shame”. These were not momentary lapses. They were intentional moves to prepare the way for a new type of nationalism and the return of denial, deliberate offsetting and relativisation. We must continually be prepared for attacks on memorial culture that will assume a new character. In fact, this concerns the issue of national identity and our country’s conception of itself.

Conflicts about the political interpretation of history have their impact on the memorial centres which became part of the state’s political philosophy in the newly formed Federal Republic of Germany after the country’s reunification following the two different experiences of dictatorship. Now the memorial centres are no longer so sure of themselves, either. The critique of rituals of remembrance expressed in research circles as “uneasiness about memorial culture”<sup>8</sup> and the affirmation that has come to replace the earlier offensive attitude in the memorial centres is currently being voiced from a different side and motivated by completely different reasons. The memorial centres are discovering how far their success mobilises opposing forces and how relevant the discussion about the past still is, and that, contrary to some assessments published in recent years, it is still a matter of “hot history”.

There is no question that right wing extremists have always hated the memorial centres which bear witness to the crimes of the Nazis, and therefore to German crimes. As far back as thirty years ago, the nationalist German journalist Armin Mohler specifically mentioned overcoming “the fuss about coming to terms with the past” as a

precondition for a liberated sense of national self-confidence. This demand was clearly formulated in 1985 in the “Deutschen Monatsheften” (“German Monthly Bulletins”) published by a far right organisation, the “Deutschen Kulturwerk Europäischen Geistes” (“German Cultural Factory of the European Spirit”): “The road to self-liberation of the Germans runs over the rubble of the concentration camp memorial centres.” Liberation from what they call “the guilt cult” in order to pave the way for a new type of nationalism was, and still is, a key concern of not a few masterminds of the New Right. There are grounds for fearing that, from now on, this kind of thinking will be vociferously advocated in parliament and will probably also be expressed in broadcasting councils or supervisory bodies of centres for political education, and maybe even in memorial centres. Now it will depend on how strong the opposition and resistance in our society proves to be. As yet there is still broad and gratifying political unanimity among all democratic forces and parties in this country to confront the demon in a decisive way.

Right-wing extremism is undoubtedly the biggest challenge we are facing today, in Germany as well as in many other countries where large sections of the population are economically insecure and feel anxious, which makes them receptive to rabble-rousing against alleged culprits. The problem involves not only the populist right wing parties but also the dangers of erosion in the middle of society. We could say that political weight has shifted across the whole spectrum. What we need here is a clear bulwark against ideology that is hostile to human rights. The challenges of the significant rise in right-wing extremism confront the memorial centres for commemoration of Nazi crimes with a substantial task. They now have to prove themselves and contribute to strengthening democratic counter-forces and demystifying the new prophets of doom.

Under the influence of changing social challenges, rising visitor numbers and expanding tasks, last year the Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials and the FORUM of Working Groups in the Federal German states addressed a joint declaration to the public and to politicians.<sup>9</sup> They demanded greater efforts for researching into and analysing the past and for the work of communication, and an end to the imbalances in this field. The following points should be prioritised in the further development of the German government’s memorial centre conception:

- support for innovative pedagogical projects, especially the development of integrative formats for migrants,
- ways of financially supporting individual projects and smaller memorial centres for the field of work on Nazi history along the lines of existing government budget allocations for the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship,
- preservation of old buildings and remains that are under acute threat of collapse in the former concentration camps and at comparable sites,
- securing and cataloguing of collections and archives to safeguard knowledge transfer for the next generation.

Given the particular need for networking among the decentralised memorial scene in Germany, the permanent security and significant reinforcement of the Memorial Museums Department is a core feature of this declaration. Especially with regard to the generation change that is due here in the coming period, a structure is urgently required to save the accumulated knowledge and experience of the past decades. As early as the tenth anniversary, Reinhard Rürup pointed out the indispensability of the Department for the work of memorial centres in Germany.<sup>10</sup> On that occasion, in 2003,

Knut Nevermann, who was then head of the office of the minister of state for culture and the media, declared that the Memorial Museums Department would have to be expanded on a long-term basis but that “through the Department’s efficiency and the collegial contact between memorial centres” a professional level had already been reached that was unmatched elsewhere in the world. He added, “It would be absurd to cast doubt on a structure that is so meaningful and productive.”<sup>11</sup>

Although I assume there can be no possible threat to the continuation of such a successful project, the planned expansion – and the fifteen years that have elapsed since then should have been time enough for it – has largely failed to occur. The Topography of Terror has had no scope for this within the framework of its budget.

In this light, we sincerely hope that in Thomas Lutz’s remaining years in office the basis will be laid for increased resources for this indispensable mission to tackle the growing demands on it. Perhaps then our colleague Thomas Lutz will be able to realise a project that he mentioned in an interview when he was asked about his great professional dream: “To have enough time one day to write a record of the development of the research and communication of the history of the Nazi period in memorial centres.”<sup>12</sup>

**Dr. Detlef Garbe** is the director of Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial and spokesman for the Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorial Museums in Germany.

1 The book appeared a year later: Detlef Garbe, ed. *Die vergessenen KZs? Gedenkstätten für die Opfer des NS-Terrors in der Bundesrepublik*. Bornheim-Merten 1983.

2 See Detlef Garbe. “Von der Peripherie in das Zentrum der Geschichtskultur. Tendenzen der Gedenkstättenentwicklung.” In Bernd Faulenbach and Franz-Josef Jelich, eds. “Asymmetrisch verflochtene Parallelgeschichte?” *Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik und der DDR in Ausstellungen, Museen und Gedenkstätten*. Essen 2005, p. 59–84.

3 *Netzwerk der Erinnerung. 10 Jahre Memorial Museums Department der Stiftung Topographie des Terrors*. A publication of the Stiftung Topographie des Terrors, Berlin, edited by Reinhard Rürup. Berlin 2003, p. 8.

4 See Thomas Lutz with Marie Schulze. “Gedenkstätten für die Opfer nationalsozialistischer Gewalt in Deutschland.” In *Gedenkstättenrundbrief Nr. 187 (9/2017)*: 3–17.

5 Cited from: *Netzwerk der Erinnerung* (see Note 3), p. 47.

6 Speech by German President Joachim Gauck on Holocaust Memorial Day, 27 January 2015, [https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2015/kw05\\_gedenkstunde/357044](https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2015/kw05_gedenkstunde/357044) (accessed on 8. 2. 2018).

7 Speech of the President of the German Bundestag, Prof. Norbert Lammert, in “Gedenkstunde der Hamburgischen Bürgerschaft zur Erinnerung an das gewaltsame Ende der ersten parlamentarischen Demokratie in Deutschland im März 1933 und an die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus im Plenarsaal des Hamburger Rathauses” on 11 April 2013. Published by Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg, Hamburg 2013, p. 14–33, esp. p. 31.

8 See Aleida Assmann, *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur. Eine Intervention*. Munich 2013.

9 Arbeitsgemeinschaft der KZ-Gedenkstätten/FORUM der Landesarbeitsgemeinschaften in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland der Gedenkstätten, Erinnerungsorte und -initiativen in Deutschland, Erklärung “Erinnerungskultur und historisch-politische Bildung stärken – Gedenkstätten an den Orten des NS-Terrors fordern größere Anstrengungen für Aufarbeitung und Vermittlung und ein Ende der Ungleichgewichte”, Berlin, 5 May 2017

10 *Netzwerk der Erinnerung* (see Note 3), p. 9.

11 Cited from *ibid.* p. 47.

12 Cited from *ibid.* p. 19.

# State Crimes in the Context of their Historical Reappraisal – an International Comparison

A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH UWE BERGMEIER, CAROL GLUCK AND ALEXANDER HASGALL. MODERATED BY THOMAS LUTZ



## Thomas Lutz

In this discussion, with the help of my colleagues on the panel I would like to focus on the international perspective when dealing with the history of Nazi crimes. This is becoming increasingly important for memorial museums, as is apparent on two levels:

The first level concerns the exchange of ideas and information about the history and present-day importance of the Nazi crimes. There are numerous binational and international projects related to this. At the moment, for example, my colleague Klaus Hesse is preparing a major exhibition about the German occupation with NIOD,<sup>1</sup> the Dutch research institute on war and the Holocaust.

But there is only one international organisation that continuously works for an exchange between experts and political representatives, usually diplomats: the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA).<sup>2</sup> This organisation now has 33 members, and Germany has been a member since the Stockholm Conference in 2000.

I would like to give an example of the importance of the Alliance. For years there has been criticism of the Jasenovac Memorial in Croatia. Jasenovac was the biggest camp complex operated by the fascist Ustasha government in the formally independent state of Croatia. The most important issue is that the fate of the Serbian victims and the murdered Roma are not presented adequately there. Recently a French colleague from the Mémorial de la Shoah museum, a Dutch colleague from Anne Frank House and myself held consultations on behalf of the IHRA in Croatia to make it clear that there can only be an end to the persistent arguments about the memorial if all the victims' groups receive appropriate consideration and recognition. Discussions with the new ministers for culture and education showed that they were fully aware of the conflict. At the same time it became obvious that in the political sphere and in society as a whole – and in the context of the wars that occurred with the break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s – there are strong nationalist tendencies that are unwilling to face any challenge to their historical myths and that should be treated with consideration. I am convinced that an international dialogue which reacts sensitively to the situation on the ground but nonetheless advocates that the historical myths should no longer be circulated, or should actually be replaced by others, is the only way to achieve an open dialogue. At the moment there seems to be a small window of possibility in Croatia. We should not let the chance slip by.

Positive developments in the international dialogue are certainly possible in this region. Six years ago we could hardly have envisaged the success of at least one of the projects initiated by UNESCO, on which I collaborated as an advisor, in creating a joint



post-Yugoslavian exhibition about the Second World War for the national exhibitions in the Auschwitz Memorial. Today, historical experts from the Yugoslavian successor states have reached agreement about the history of the Second World War in relation to the victims' groups, the number of people killed and those responsible for the crimes. Unfortunately the politicians and public opinion lag behind in generally acknowledging the factual representation of the historical events.

This example shows that in Europe we can only achieve a common understanding of the history of the Second World War if we begin by comprehending the history of the different effects in the individual countries and regions. After that it makes sense to question our own specific picture of history in the international discourse.

Looking back, we recall that in Germany, too, persistent demands from abroad, particularly from survivors' organisations, played a major part in the evolution of the memorial museum landscape.

At least we can see that a one-dimensional understanding of the history of power in the 20th century imposed from above, in the way the European Parliament has acted with the House of European History in Brussels, is the wrong approach. It continues to spread historical myths and ultimately opens the floodgates to right-wing populist and nationalist interpretations.

In the following discussion we shall consider the second level I referred to earlier: the internationalisation of remembrance of criminal regimes and the exchange with colleagues who are concerned with different regimes that committed state crimes.

An international organisation for this purpose was already established back in 2003: the International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of Victims of Public Crimes (IC MEMO). Many of our colleagues who work at memorial museums for Nazi victims in other countries were involved in this. The then director of Wewelsburg District Museum, Wulff Brebeck, played an important role. From the start, the newly

Panel discussion, from left to right: Thomas Lutz, Alexander Hasgall, Carol Gluck, Uwe Bergmeier

founded organisation received considerable support from the umbrella organisation, the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The goal of IC MEMO is to ensure that the sustained professionalization of memorial museums as museums with special tasks occurs within a specialist discourse.

Since the committee has existed it has become evident that it did not lead to down-playing of Nazi crimes or those of other violent regimes. Everyone involved is well aware that history is so diverse that it would be wrong to compile “victim charts” of who has suffered more.

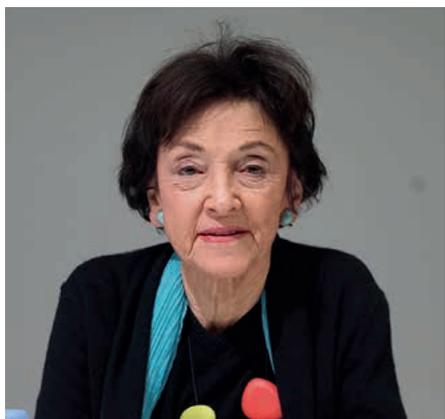
Because state systems of violence often had international impacts, it makes sense to work on understanding the crimes through an international network. There are also many similarities in the daily professional work of different memorial museums. This includes issues like the maintenance of sites and buildings, the tributes to different victims’ groups, their recognition and restitution in the successor societies, or the punishment of the perpetrators.

Let me now introduce our first panel guest, Professor Carol Gluck, who teaches and researches at Columbia University in New York. Carol Gluck is the founder and director of the Committee on Global Thought, a programme based at Columbia University. In this function she has organised numerous seminars, events, and other types of discussion on memorial policy in global contexts. Carol Gluck is a professor of modern Japanese history and has published widely on this subject. She has also tried to persuade the Japanese government of the need to change its policy in relation to the history of the Second World War.

The Second World War lasted longer in Asia than in Europe – a fact that most Europeans are hardly aware of. As far as I know, the only museum that deals with this aspect is the new Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk in Poland. This brings me to my first question: How do the Japanese remember the Second World War?

### **Carol Gluck**

First, let me say thank you also from the international community to Dr. Lutz. This museum and the Memorial Museums Department have been very important for those of us who work on the politics of memory in a global context. In 2014 Dr. Lutz came to New York on the occasion of the opening of the National September 11 Memorial Museum, which was charged with the delicate and politically difficult task of providing an account of the terrorist attacks. He brought the experience you have heard about tonight to bear on the 9/11 museum. I thank him for that.



As for Japan: Japanese remember the Second World War with two main stories. The first is a victims’ story, in which the Japanese people were victims of their leaders who “embroidered” them in a catastrophic war. The second story is a shrunken chronology that begins with the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and ends with the atomic bombings and surrender in 1945. This, of

course, is the war the Americans fought against the Japanese. It is not World War Two, which began for Japan in 1937 with Japanese aggression and total war in China, following an earlier aggression in Manchuria in 1931. This shrunken chronology resulted

in the disappearance of the China War from the story, yet the China War had been the reason for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in the first place. Because of the American occupation and postwar alliance, Japanese were able to continue to think of themselves as victims of their wartime leaders, who were now living in a new and peaceful world based on the acknowledgement of the wrongs of the Pacific War, 1941 to 1945. That story lasted as long as the Cold War and the dominance of the United States in Japanese foreign relations. With the rise of Asia, beginning in the 1980s, and particularly in the 1990s, the people and governments of China, South Korea and other places demanded that Japan finally confront its wartime aggressions and actions in Asia. That is the process that is still going on now.

**Thomas Lutz**

The Shoah is at the centre of remembrance of the Second World War in Europe. What are the most important themes in Japan in this context?

**Carol Gluck**

Struck by how often you mentioned Nazi “crimes”, I realized that in Asia there is less talk about crimes than about wartime “atrocities” committed by Japanese in the countries of East and Southeast Asia. The issues are, first of all aggression and aggressive war; second, for Korea, an aggressive war on top of decades of brutal colonial rule. Then there are the atrocities: the Nanjing massacre; the former “comfort women” or sex slaves of the Imperial Japanese army; biological and chemical warfare; and more recently forced labour – an issue familiar to you – and other actions in China, Korea and elsewhere. Thus, it is the aggression and the atrocities that are central to wartime memory in Asia.

**Thomas Lutz**

You talk about a war of aggression. What does this mean for the remembrance of this war in Asia, and particularly for Japan and its neighbours? In Germany we have worked for reconciliation with the countries that suffered under the Nazi regime and the Wehrmacht. What is the attitude to this in Asia? And how can the process of rapprochement between peoples and nations be steered in the right direction?

**Carol Gluck**

I think it is important to understand the difference between the political chronology of West German memory of the war and the chronology of war memory in Asia. As I said earlier, the Japanese war stories constructed with the guidance of the United States were frozen in place for decades, only beginning to melt as the Cold War ended. At that point Japanese were forced to consider the Asian, rather than only the American parts of the war. The difference is stark when you compare the geopolitical forces for West German integration in Cold War Western Europe during the 1940s and 50s (NATO, economic integration, etc.) to the near absence of Asia in Japanese Cold War politics, which were dominated by the United States.

I think the more relevant comparison is between war memory in East Asia and Eastern Europe. You mentioned Southeastern Europe. The current memory politics relating to World War II in the countries of Eastern Europe – from the Baltics in the North to

the Balkans in the South – is as vexed and contested as the politics of war memory in East Asia today. The reason is simple: In Eastern Europe the end of the Cold war unfroze the war memory dictated under the Soviet regime, a counterpart to Japanese war memory maintained under the aegis of the United States. And so, since the 1990s in both Eastern Europe and East Asia, the war has become an ever more present past. One might well say that the postwar in Eastern Europe and East Asia did not begin until the Berlin Wall fell, the Soviet Union dissolved, and the Cold War ended.

As you remember, reconciliation was not immediate in Western Europe. It took a long time. In Asia there is now a great deal of talk about reconciliation, which is new, at least in using that term. Reconciliation in Asia will also take time, and it will be determined as it was in Western Europe to a good extent by politics, both domestic politics within the countries and international politics in the region.

### **Thomas Lutz**

We are meeting here in a documentation centre and we have talked a lot about memorial museums. In Japan, too, there are museums devoted to the topic of the Second World War. The best known is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. What do these museums mean for the understanding of history and for future generations?

### **Carol Gluck**

As someone who spends even my holidays going to war museums, I can assure you that there is no museum in Japan, China, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines etc., like the Topographie des Terrors. There is no museum that is capable of showing the full context of the war, arousing reflection in the visitors. Each country has extremely national, and many of them nationalistic, museums. This is another indication of where the process of war memory stands today in Asia. In Japan the most important museum is the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. Almost all the museums – there are several hundred museums relating to World War Two in Japan – have the word “peace” in their title and their message is almost always “Never again”. Hiroshima is the biggest, with some 1.5 million visitors a year, international as well as Japanese. Yet the Hiroshima museum, too, reflects those early war stories. The theme, of course, is the horrors of nuclear war, but the museum presents both of Japan’s original war stories: the victims’ narrative (A-bomb survivors and Japan as a whole) and the narrative of the Pacific War. Some context is provided, but not enough. Even the peace museums do not do what the Topographie des Terrors does, and the peace museums that do try to give the context of Japanese empire and aggression have few visitors. But it is also true that the few war museums that actually celebrate war do not attract large audiences either, perhaps because they are not good museums that would be of interest to younger generations. So I think that there is a long way to go, before the museums in Asian countries will present the kind of context and historical inclusion that the Topographie des Terrors has embodied since it began. I’m sorry to report that.

### **Thomas Lutz**

The next panel member I would like to introduce is Alexander Hasgall. He is head of the Council for Doctoral Education of the European University Association in Geneva and is a co-founder of the Working Group for Policy on the Past in Switzerland. Today,

however, we have invited him to join the panel because for around as long as the Memorial Museums Department of the Topography of Terror has existed he has been concerned with human rights compliance in various South American countries. The title of his doctoral thesis is “Regime of Recognition: Struggles for Truth and Justice in the Reappraisal of the Argentinian Military Dictatorship”. So, unlike in Southeast Asia, the concern here is primarily a national conflict, a civil war, a dictatorship. People often talk about the “Argentinian military dictatorship”, but the victims’ side is dissatisfied with this term. Why?

### **Alexander Hasgall**

I think the difficult questions of recognition that are raised in the Topography of Terror also played a major role in Argentina. So I am very glad to have the opportunity to discuss this topic here. The case of Argentina is interesting because the military takeover on 24 March 1976 did not originate from a foreign power but was a coup d’état. Internationally it was widely regarded as imposing order in the chaos in Argentina, which was torn apart by massive internal conflicts. The coup definitely had support from within Argentinian society. Around a year after the coup, aside from specifically destroying the left Peronist opposition, the goal was to change the economic system. As the well-known journalist Rodolfo Walsh, who was later murdered, wrote in an open letter to the ruling military leaders on the first anniversary of the coup, this resulted in a fall in real wages of around forty per cent. Aside from the military components, civil interests were also definitely affected by the dictatorship. This was barely discussed for a long time because the junta, which was brought to trial after the Falklands War defeat, dominated the discourse. But in the last ten to fifteen years the other question, about the extent to which civil interests played a role, came up increasingly often. The result is that the term “military dictatorship” is now being replaced by the term “civil military dictatorship”. This poses the question of guilt and responsibility in a new way, although it does not diminish the responsibility of the military.



### **Thomas Lutz**

After a “civil military dictatorship”, how is it possible to ask this question about guilt and responsibility in the first place, and how can the victims be given a hearing?

### **Alexander Hasgall**

The issue of transitional justice was characterised by the case of South Africa, with the re-examination of apartheid and the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As we know, the idea of a truth, and particularly the Christian element that calls for the truth to be spoken out (St John’s Gospel says, the truth will set you free), played a decisive role in South Africa. Maybe there was also hope that the victims could overcome their trauma by being given a voice. The past decades have shown that this process is very complex and the hope of conquering the trauma by uncovering the truth has rarely been fulfilled because it leads to new questions. Just talking is not enough, because we also have to consider material support such as reparations.

Particularly in Argentina this caused a big debate that resulted, among other things, in splitting the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, one of the foremost Argentinian human rights organisations. One grouping was prepared to accept reparation payments because they saw speeches as too “cheap” and thought material compensation was necessary, whereas others argued against being bought off. This shows that the goal of giving the victims a voice, their own subjectivity, involves both concrete support and symbolic actions, and it may also involve contradictory opinions. Ultimately, these processes are protracted and actually endless. There is no such thing as instant reappraisal; but at the same time societies have an interest in evolving further and leaving the past behind. There is a wide range of different dynamics in Latin America. Guatemala has a very good truth commission but it only had limited success in using its findings for educational purposes. A good report that has appeared now in several volumes clearly assigns the main responsibility for most crimes to the military. But the wider society has barely responded to it, and it does not prevent members of the military with shady backgrounds from pursuing political careers and getting elected. At the same time there are countries like Argentina and Chile that are working together and cooperating with foreign institutions like the Topography of Terror to develop a memorial culture and create their own momentum.

**Thomas Lutz**

What is the role of memorial museums in Argentina in this process?

**Alexander Hasgall**

There are very different kinds of memorial museums. This is due not only to the geographical size of the country but also to the wide variations and partly to internal conflicts between different organisations of family members and political organisations. Rather than one standard form of remembrance there are widely differing approaches, always related to the current political situation, which can change abruptly through a change of government. It also depends which role public opinion and the state play in remembrance. This can alter very greatly when there is fundamental political change. At the moment Argentina has a conservative government that wants to prioritise its own narrative and hopes this will help to revive the “two demons” theory, which was believed to have been laid to rest. The theory claims that before the military coup Argentina was in the deadly grip of left wing and right wing extremist forces and the putsch was ultimately a reaction to this situation.

**Thomas Lutz**

I would now like to introduce another panel member, Uwe Bergmeier. He spent time in Israel as a volunteer for Action Reconciliation Service for Peace and, after studying political science, he worked at the House of the Wannsee Conference training people for educational work on the history of Nazi crimes. At the same time he has been working on contemporary conflicts in Africa. He visited Sudan as part of his studies almost twenty years ago. From 2000 he worked in Uganda trying to help young people to escape from the spiral of violence of the civil war in the North. Since 2009 he has been the Programme Coordinator of the Civil Peace Service in Kenya implemented by the Association for Development Cooperation, a faith-based non-governmental

organisation located in Cologne, Germany. This brings us to the most recent conflict we want to discuss today. In the years 2007 and 2008 Kenya unexpectedly faced a de-facto violent civil war following disastrous presidential elections, with results that were unacceptable to most of the political actors. The German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) and other development agencies realised that it was impossible simply to return to the usual practices of international cooperation. It was necessary first of all to provide support that would give the torn and broken society a chance for new cohesion.

In dealing with a topical conflict, what role does examining the history of the conflict play? Can it be dealt with at all?

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

I am participating in this discussion not as a representative of a memorial museum or an academic institution but as someone who works as a specialist advisor in civil conflict in African countries, where the interpretation of remembrance as we practice it, with memorial museums and institutionalised commemoration, does not exist. My example is Kenya, the country where I work at present. This has confronted me with the crimes that followed the presidential elections in 2007–08, and how to deal with them in our work. It is not about genocide, but about a situation of internal, political, inter-ethnic crimes against human rights. I have been working for years with an agency of German foreign policy, the Civil Peace Service (CPS). For the past 18 years, specialists – this is not a student exchange or volunteer programme – have been working internationally in conflict regions, trying to foster possibilities with local groups ranging from conflict resolution and management to reconciliation processes following crimes. Whether and how this succeeds is a persistent bone of contention in our work. Is it the right thing anyway? As Germans, we go into a region, in my case Kenya, or before that, Northern Uganda, and try to start talking with perpetrators and victims' groups and to initiate dialogues – in fact, to create spaces for dialogue in the first place. The latter are crucial because none of these countries has an organised memorial museum or institutionalised commemoration for these topics.

This raises the question as to whether we need memorial museums or whether we have to think about other forms of remembrance in the memorial work in such countries which helps the people to deal with the past. I could give many examples. Take Northern Uganda: Sometimes commemorative work succeeds if we organise a discussion between victims of raids by the Lord's Resistance Army,<sup>3</sup> for example, between children they kidnapped and turned into child soldiers and murderers, and their former village communities and families when the kidnapped victims return to their home later. We do this on a very basic level of remembering, dealing with guilt and possible forgiveness. Once people open up and talk about a crime, a process of dialogue begins.

In Kenya, for example, in many cases this is still not possible today. Attempts at recovery are already overlaid by the next atrocity situation – and this is typical for African violent conflicts. This means that the so-called post-election violence in 2007



and 2008 has not been fully dealt with to this day. We could mention an international instrument, the International Criminal Court (ICC), which tried to tackle this topic on a legal level to identify perpetrators, but not in terms of the society as they understand it. This ended in disaster in 2005 because the Court, as an international judicial body invoking crimes against humanity, failed to bring to account local people who were politically responsible. This created further divisions in Kenyan society. In political terms the attempt at international examination of past crimes was seen as an unacceptable and arrogant intervention. Following this, Kenya reverted back to local forms of dealing with its own history of human rights abuses. It is an arduous process that is continuing slowly with international support but mainly influenced by its own civic players (such as civil society and religious institutions).

### **Thomas Lutz**

Several years after it opened, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum resolved, after highly controversial discussions, that the demand of “Never again!” after the Shoah created an urgent need to take account of current conflicts as well. In 2007 it planned to focus public attention on the genocide in southern Sudan. You will be heading a project for an aid organisation in this region in future and will develop and support projects there. This makes me wonder whether the mission of “Never again!” after the Holocaust can really be productively linked with the goals of a current project. Or do we need other ways and means for this?

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

In my opinion there is no simple link. In the African context of experience of violence we are dealing with a completely different culture of remembrance that is not necessarily institutionalised and certainly not desired by state authorities because it often contradicts the existing government’s or regime’s policies. Any intervention by the state makes dealing with the past crimes more complicated – if there is any reappraisal in the first place it is politically charged. In this respect the “Never again!” approach may be laudable as a vision, but as far as I know it has never been transformed into political agendas to support social processes in crisis states – such as South Sudan, for example. Instead, we should talk about possibilities of working on successive layers of crisis and traumata that are feasible for everyone in a country with such a history. There are around 2.2 million refugees outside and inside the country, poverty is rampant and the political institutions are extremely weak and corrupt. It is not even clear why people take flight and which root causes have to be tackled. Do they flee to escape armed civil war triggered by different militias, or because of poverty – or both? The refugees, as well as the families who stay behind, have existential problems in coping with this situation. Questions of remembrance, of working through earlier crimes, of the culprits, or of who is prepared to take responsibility, are very far away from the people there in their struggle for survival.

### **Thomas Lutz**

The following question is for all three members of the panel: In what way does the German commemoration of Nazi crimes influence remembrance and commemoration in the countries you know well?



Plenary session of the International Task Force for Holocaust Remembrance, Education, and Research (ITF) at the U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., 2003

### **Alexander Hasgall**

The experiences of elucidating Nazi crimes play a major role in how people speak about the crimes. Terms such as “genocide” for the events in Argentina from 1976 to 1983 are widely used by many victims’ groups and on the left. And the term “concentration camp” is often used for places where the military engaged in clandestine torture and murder. In other words, on the level of discourse Nazism plays a major role and this, in turn, generates a debate about uniqueness and diversity and has created difficulties with regard to concepts. On the subject of memorial policy: In Berlin symbolic signposts to the individual concentration camps stand on Wittenbergplatz; the same symbols stand in Buenos Aires. In other words, memorial symbols from the German context have been adopted one-to-one with the aim of giving the crime adequate recognition. At the same time, starting from the end of the dictatorship there were already independent forms of remembrance, for example those connected with the visual portrayal of people who had disappeared. They have their own impact internationally. So you can’t answer the question with a simple Yes or No, but there is certainly an exchange and an examination on the meta level about how far the German discussion can be adopted for the crimes in Argentina, or not.

### **Carol Gluck**

I think it is clear that in the 72 years since the end of the war the culture of war memory has changed, and a considerable part of that change developed out of West German memory culture. There is now something that I call a “global memory culture”, much of which evolved in relation to Holocaust memory, in which Germany figured importantly. As Japan now faces the Asian parts of the war, Japanese have to do so in the context of a global memory culture that did not yet exist in the 1950s. One example is the change in notions of responsibility. In the 1950s it was easy enough to ascribe responsibility to the leaders: Hitler in Germany or the militarists in Japan. Over time the concept of responsibility changed to organizational guilt, then to “ordinary men”, and finally to the complicity of the wider society in the development and acceptance

of fascism and war. These changes in the understanding of responsibility are now part of global memory culture that is partly a result of the process of remembering the Holocaust in Europe. There are many other examples, including the so-called politics of apology, where one head of state apologizes to victims of another state, a practice that did not exist on this scale in the 1950s. And in almost every concern – legal, social, political – I would say that the German working-through of war memory has had a decisive effect. And this effect will not disappear, precisely because these are now the expectations, the norms, and practices of the politics of a global memory culture understood around the world, having to do with World War Two but also with some of the other examples of memory we have spoken about here.

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

Understanding memorial cultures is an important first step. I don't believe it is productive to transfer memorial cultures from Europe or Asia into other cultures. This means we have to invest far more time in looking at how societies deal with experiences of internal violence. What forms of reappraisal exist, up to and including reconciliation? Which approaches can be helpful and should be promoted by us, coming from outside? So far we haven't been very creative with methods for making remembrance more lively and effective in the sense of working towards reconciliation. Today, much more than ever, we need the exchange between the memorial museums – the educational and academic areas – with other memorial cultures in the world. In times of multicultural societies that have experienced traumata, it is necessary for all sides to listen and learn from each other – that is my message this evening. These debates automatically bring us to new methodical forms that trigger previously unforeseen reactions in other cultures. Beside this – and here we have a classical approach with the method that has already been mentioned several times today – if we want remembrance and reappraisal, both governmental and non-governmental players are needed. This interaction is crucial, and it applies equally to Europe and Africa, however hard it is sometimes to bring these two players together.

We also need the support of actors who are concerned with the “truth”. Disclosure and the discussion about backgrounds in complicated conflicts is a highly decisive step. Over the years I have become very modest in relation to reappraisal and reconciliation processes. Discovering the “truth” and achieving agreement among the relevant parties is a big step. And one last point: Do we, as Europeans, have the right to foster this in Africa or Asia? In my opinion the answer is clearly “Yes”, because the exchange using the competence we have in this area is productive for all sides. I always see this as an encouragement for people who leave their own country to work in the field of violent conflicts in other societies.

### **Thomas Lutz**

The question that concerns all of us working on this topic is that of future challenges.

### **Carol Gluck**

This is what I call bringing the past into the future. There are two increasingly pressing challenges. The first is the end of living memory. Based on what we know about the memory of the two World Wars, war memory retains considerable power to the



On the roof terrace of the U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C., in a break during the ITF plenary session, 2003

third generation. In Japan, the “children who don’t know the war”, as they are called, now constitute the majority of the population. Like younger generations in other countries, they don’t know much about the war. But it is not the facts that are at issue. It is rather that for younger generations, there is little direct connection between the facts they learn, the objects they see, or the narratives they hear, and any political or civic imperative on their own part to act in the present to prevent wars or atrocities from happening in their time and place. If you follow along behind school groups at Auschwitz or Hiroshima, or indeed in any war museum, you will see that most of the students are paying attention. And polls show that they remember the objects (the piles of shoes in Auschwitz) and images (the melted clock stopped at 8.15 in Hiroshima), but the message of “Never again” remains abstract, remote, unconnected to their lives. Here we return to the question of responsibility. For the recognition of past state crimes cannot be the only objective of putting the past on display. In democratic states at least, the end-goal must be a sense of individual responsibility, civic responsibility, and political responsibility, to be activated and acted upon in the present.

The second challenge has, of course, to do with the politics of our time. Amid surging nationalism and right-wing populist politics, governments in many places are engaged in rewriting national history. Think, for example, of China, Russia, Hungary, India, and Turkey. For a number of them, particularly in East Asia and Eastern Europe, World War Two stands at the centre of national and nationalist memory, as in Poland, Ukraine, the Baltics, China, and Japan. In these cases one can scarcely say that the past is being wielded in the name of – or with the open processes of – a liberal society. In short, the history of war memory is not necessarily a progressive story. Not only can the lessons of the past fade but they can also change character so as to be almost unrecognizable. How, then, can museums adapt their work, their objects, their narratives in the face of the generational and political challenges? That is the question. As a message, “Never again” is simply not enough. And so the task before us, it seems to me, is how to relate bad pasts to better futures in ways that speak to audiences today and tomorrow.

**Alexander Hasgall**

The preconditions have changed in comparison to the 1990s and 2000s, with the emergence of a global memorial culture that evolved into a dominant narrative and in which practically everybody wanted to participate. This development has probably not reached Asia to the same extent. But meanwhile – as I already mentioned – a conservative government in Argentina has again begun questioning the positions on which agreement seemed to have been reached. Or in Germany, where we intermittently have a “welcome culture” towards migrants and refugees, but on the other hand, the AfD is gaining greater acceptance and aims to change public discourse in the field of memorial culture, among other things. Perhaps memory culture is less deeply rooted than we have assumed so far.

**Carol Gluck**

I think our definitions of memory cultures are different. The one you just mentioned is not the same as the one I am talking about, which relates to political norms and practices, such as the politics of apology. Indeed, few countries have the kind of memory culture that exists in Germany, where everyone is expected to have a certain view of a certain past. I think that is unusual. France has a strong memory culture too, but I doubt that many in France would make the statement you just made, which was that in the 1990s we thought we had it figured out.

**Alexander Hasgall**

If we consider such widely different cases as the Australian government’s public apology to the Aborigines, the development of a specifically German memorial culture, Gacaca justice in Rwanda or the dozens of commissions for truth and reconciliation and of historians that have meanwhile emerged worldwide, then for some years we had the impression that a “global morality” (to use Eleazar Barkan’s term) or a “globalised remembrance” (the term of Daniel Levy and Natan Szneider) would become established. But maybe this was largely tied into an academic discourse and not focused enough on political interests.

**Carol Gluck**

I agree with you, that the idea of mixing all of the memoirs of all this bad past is over.

**Thomas Lutz**

After the reunification of Germany, the memorial museums for the victims of Nazi crimes received new and important support from the government. The struggle for recognition and for support through the policy that characterised the 1980s in West Germany was over. Official remembrance policy, however, is increasingly confined to rituals that have little appeal to young people. By now, thanks to the excellent scholarly research of the past three decades, we have far more precise information about Nazism. This means we can develop the work of historical education on a much sounder basis. On the other hand, because the biographical aspects of the history, and especially the survivors, are disappearing, the memorial museums are being told to look at other topics. Ten years ago the topic was human rights. Today the demand is for education towards democracy.



Participants in the German-Israeli Joint Venture on questions of different approaches to the history of the Shoah in the two countries. From left to right: Christian Staffa (Action Reconciliation Service for Peace), Shulamit Imber, Yariv Lapide (Yad Vashem), Elke Gryglewski (House of the Wannsee Conference – Memorial and Educational Site), Peter Koch (Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site), Monika Kingreen (Fritz Bauer Institute), Haim Gartner (Yad Vashem), Thomas Lutz, Tanja Ronen (Ghetto Fighter's House Museum), 2004

The present challenge I see for Germany is that we have to find ways of communicating what we have learned from working through the history to open-minded members of the general public. In doing so we should bear in mind that, more and more, the people who are interested in this history have experienced different types of socialisation. Their knowledge varies widely and they have their own specific relationships to the different spheres they live in. Educational work must react to this with much greater subtlety, and needs the corresponding financial support for this.

In the 1990s in Germany the eyewitnesses of the Nazi period and the survivors' organisations played a major role. Many of them have since passed away. But despite the growing distance in time we have interesting results: compared with 25 years ago there are many more film recordings and videos of eyewitnesses. We know far more about the different victims' groups and individual biographies and can make better use of the source material. But of course, the possibility of a personal encounter with a survivor is fading all the time. In particular, the lobby of the international survivors' organisations, which were outstandingly important for the development in the 1990s, is diminishing. On the other hand, memorial museums often have very close contact with family members of survivors from the second to the fourth generation, which was not the case some years ago.

When we talk about Argentina or Kenya there are obviously many more eyewitnesses because the events – especially in Kenya – occurred not so long ago.

### Alexander Hasgall

Argentina is a special case because of the “disappeared” persons who were killed and ceased to exist from that time on. It is interesting that no victims' organisations existed in Argentina for a long time, and then they had huge problems about recognition because the survivors from the camps were often seen as possible traitors or collaborators. This is only improving slowly and it has taken a long time for the organisations of survivors from the camps to be acknowledged by other victims' groups. In Argentina, too, the eyewitnesses are already very old but now the children of “disappeared”

persons are beginning to ask questions. But they are not actually direct eyewitnesses of the crimes, which raises doubts about their role in victim organisations – and the role of relatives of victims as a whole.

### **Thomas Lutz**

This brings us to what the history means for people who have a direct biographical connection with the events. What is the situation in Japan and Kenya?

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

In Kenya the historical events of 2007–08, and the personal entanglements we have mentioned, still dominate the society so powerfully that their remembrance is very complicated. In Germany, the historical distance allows the challenges to be clearly addressed and followed up but this is very different in Kenya. Yet even in the Kenyan case, if debates occur about crimes within the society, it is due to testimonies by the victims and their courage to bear witness openly.

### **Carol Gluck**

But these are different issues. I think you are right, Alexander, that all those cases were mixed in the memory discourse, and what we begin to see is that you cannot mix them. Because of the Holocaust, I think the German case is distinctive – not unique, but distinctive. In Japan and in East Asia, the war has become a raw issue again because it has been raised politically, but it is not about remembering what their grandfathers did, not in short, a biographical connection. In Japan it is a political and geopolitical issue, which seems also to be true in Eastern Europe.

The issue for younger citizens, I think, is how do you manage to convey more than one side of the picture: that your country did some bad things and other countries did too. At the moment war memory in these countries remains very one-sided, almost as if the war were yesterday, whether in Ukraine or in South Korea. Seeing only one side of national history easily fuels nationalism. And nationalistic memories of the past are a recipe for continued conflicts in the present. This seems to me slightly different, for example, to the memory of political violence in Kenya. So I think you do have to distinguish among different memory challenges. I will say that in Eastern Europe and East Asia the challenge is somehow to surmount the nationalistic memories that are being put forth by governments in Russia, Poland, China, Japan, etc. They are all rewriting history in a way that is neither biographical nor familial, but nationalistic.

### **Alexander Hasgall**

I agree, but I would ask whether Germany isn't developing in this direction as well, particularly if we look at very young Germans who no longer have the biographical links of the second and third generation. And the discussions about whether refugees should visit memorial museums as part of an integration programme, debates about national narratives and identity, and how refugees should be integrated into that will be conducted more intensively in the future. Of course it is not the same thing, but there seems to be a convergence of the two levels of discourse.

Prevention acts as an important part of memorial policy. Every paradigm change should be aimed at helping to prevent crimes. Above all, until 2011 and the failure of



Visit to Majdanek Memorial and Museum during the international conference "Memorial Sites for the Victims of Nazism in the European Perspective. Spaces for Presenting and Experiencing History", to mark the 70th anniversary of the ceremonial opening of the Majdanek Memorial and Museum, 2014

the Arab Spring we had the feeling of having learned from the history and of having created an instrument, Transitional Justice, for dealing legally with crimes, and of having experience in developing memorial museums. Many people today have the impression that this doesn't work and that insight and knowledge of history doesn't do anything to stop someone like the Syrian dictator Assad, for instance.

#### **Carol Gluck**

"Never again" does not work. Not because similar events occur again and again, but because the meaning does not seem to sink in. To younger generations the message remains too abstract.

#### **Thomas Lutz**

In Germany's case, opening up to become a more democratic society after 1968, and the movement of history workshops and memorial museums, was very important. In this context there was growing public awareness about new groups of victims like Sinti and Roma, or homosexuals. At the same time it became clear that the victims of Nazism had also suffered discrimination in the postwar period. This shows that clarifying the history contributed very specifically to the recognition of marginal social groups. And because looking at history is always a reproduction of society, the recognition of other victims' groups made society open up even further. This development seems to be in reverse at the moment. We are faced with the question of which role the memorial museums can play in this process. How can and should the institutions use the historical knowledge, as well as the respect they have won through their work, to position themselves politically in current developments? I think that is the key question to ask. But how are things in other countries?

#### **Uwe Bergmeier**

Quite different, of course. When I arrived in Kenya less than ten years ago, a national crime had occurred that could not yet be fully analysed, and for which it was still far

Opening of the Topography of Terror Foundation's touring exhibition "Twarz Getta" (The Face of the Ghetto) in the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, 2015. Photo: Kurt Blank-Markard



too early to evolve any kind of memorial culture. That was completely different from the German situation with its institutionalised remembrance. Nonetheless, we have to consider where there are links to remembrance of other historical events in the world. Certainly a common factor for all is the connection between intensive memorial culture and democratic, political culture as a living experience in each country.

For me it remains an open question, whether such a phenomenon as global remembrance exists, or can exist.

### **Carol Gluck**

The question is: What is your goal? Thomas, you said the goal is a liberal open democratic society. But this may not be the goal for people in many parts of the world when they imagine their hopes for a better future. I was struck by the fact that it is a belief in Germany and some other places that a liberal open democratic society is the goal. But this is not always the case in societies where people want a better life. They want to survive, they want to be free of violence, they want peace in their daily life, they want enough to eat, and they want things to improve. A liberal, open democratic society is not necessarily a universal value.

### **Alexander Hasgall**

As a historian I would ask whether working with the history always requires a specific goal, especially because this sometimes involves longer time periods. If we take the example of Guatemala, the results of the truth commission are not yet established within the society but there are around 20 cases of crimes resulting in death every day, which makes an annual total of around 6000 deaths. In 30 years that amounts to 180,000 deaths, which corresponds to the number of people murdered during the civil war. The whole society is impacted by this violence. In this situation one can't automatically demand that the results of the truth commission should be recognised as a priority, although the violence itself is a consequence of this war. But it can't always just be about finding a topical occasion to justify our work. Possibly it matters a great

deal for the future, and that is why the active preservation and educational processing of knowledge about systems of violence is still enormously important.

### **Thomas Lutz**

In Germany the most important starting goal of the work in memorial museums was to maintain the remembrance of the victims and to give them back their names. That is certainly not the main point for young people today. They are more concerned with knowing how the system functioned, and in asking how human beings could commit such crimes against other humans, and they are interested in continuities in the postwar society. Another thing that is definitively important for the future is that all the victims' groups find their due place in memorial policy, while on the other hand those responsible for the crimes are named, which is certainly painful for a society.

### **Alexander Hasgall**

But this can lead to fresh difficulties when an overly close link is created with identity politics, and all the groups insist on being included in memorial policy with their own specific identity. I wonder whether this corresponds to a global development, at least in the United States and Europe, by which history and memory will become part of an exclusive, specific identity.

### **Carol Gluck**

I think that is a very important point. One of the products of the memory boom, particularly from the 1990s on, is the role it plays in identity politics. Groups evoke memory as an identifying characteristic and as a political tool. I see the memory discourse as encouraging that connection. It might lead, for example, to the Turks in Germany centring on their Turkish identity, linking to a Turkish memory rather than to a German one. This is of importance today. There are many refugees who have never been part of another society, which makes the identity politics linked to memory very important to them. Or in a different example, in the United States where most Romani Americans have long considered themselves Americans, now their children want to identify themselves as Romani. When memory and identity are so strongly linked, they can hinder democracy because they end up eliminating common ground. Memory has not caused this situation, but memory has a responsibility, I think, in contemporary identity politics. Nor, of course, can you tell people that for them the future ought to be more important than the past.

### **Thomas Lutz**

What does this mean for our work?

### **Carol Gluck**

I think museums like this one and other museums can use the past in service of a future orientation. The point would be to suggest what we are doing or not doing now to prevent the suffering that might be about to happen. That is my memory mission. I am interested in creating citizens who feel responsible for their present and their future. But the question remains, how do we connect them to the past?

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

Work on remembrance should encourage the formation of identity in nations and societies. I see identity as an important, positive category, for example when young Africans reflect on the identity of an independent nation. In other words, nation-building on the basis of values. In Kenya, for example, the discussion about the “Mau Mau” warriors who fought the battle for Kenyan independence from Britain from 1952 to 1964 only became a topic for national identity after fifty years and is now very important for political education in relation to the country’s present-day problems.

### **Alexander Hasgall**

Both things are possible. In Argentina before the military dictatorship, identity was based on the army and the struggle against Spanish colonial rule. The truth commission was introduced in 1983 and documented the human rights abuses. And that was suddenly supposed to be the basis of the Argentinians’ narrative and identity. This even worked to a certain extent – the army no longer played its earlier role of creating identity in the same way. In other words, remembrance can provide the basis for a new, common identity. Museums naturally have an important role in the development of identity based on historical experiences. And in the process they have to deal with people who ignore or deny the past and those who want to use history to reinforce their particular brand of identity.

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

We can also draw conclusions for our work from the “Mau Mau” example in the period from 1952 to 1964. There are fewer and fewer eyewitnesses, and consequently ever fewer direct encounters or confrontations, but this results in new political debates. At the moment the compensation that the surviving “Mau Mau” fighters are demanding from the British is a major topic due to time pressure, because only the people who were directly involved can receive payments. This is a matter, firstly, of the special recognition of freedom fighters. In the independent state of Kenya the “Mau Mau” warriors were seen for a long time as terrorists and rebels. Even the ethnic group they belonged to was divided about how to evaluate the armed struggle. Representatives of other ethnic groups, some of whom maintained better relationships with the British, stigmatised the fighters as criminals. The second point is the importance for the national identity of Kenyan society. Even if the pride and acceptance of the warriors take precedence today, the war of independence sheds light on the causes of conflicts such as those of 2007 and 2008, and up to the present day. Our aim is to update history, not to manipulate it for our own ends.

### **Carol Gluck**

I would say that the first part about making claims for compensation against the British is itself a result of a global memory culture, because people could not make such claims against the former colonial power in earlier times. It is an example of a kind of process that we see now all over the world. As for the second part of it – the freedom fighters – we see everywhere that one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter. These are postcolonial issues and they create both a postcolonial memory and national identity.



### **Uwe Bergmeier**

On this subject, in Germany there is ongoing discussion about reparation demands from the Herero descendants in today's Namibia. The German colonial regime committed systematic genocide against the Herero and Nama ethnic groups between 1904 and 1908. Clarification of compensation is an indicator of a “good” or “bad” reappraisal of the past in widely different situations where a crime has occurred.

### **Thomas Lutz**

I would like to return to the point about which role the memorial museums play in these developments.

### **Uwe Bergmeier**

Now, more than ever, the museums about genocides and crimes against human rights in Germany need the exchange of views with other international experiences and forms of re-examining the past in dealing with traumatised, with personal and political restitutions and reconciliation processes and rituals, as well as a discussion about divisions within societies that still can't be overcome.

### **Carol Gluck**

I agree with you, but it is not only Germany that needs that. Extra-national inclusions are helpful, because they counter both nationalism and divisive identity politics.

### **Thomas Lutz**

I would like to thank the three panel members very sincerely for their contributions. During the discussion it has become clear that making international comparisons confronts us with a dilemma. To be able to judge the respective situation and compare it with others, it is necessary to have precise knowledge in each case of the history and its effects until the present day. Regrettably we could not provide that here. I hope it is clear that there are many connection points which make it meaningful to look at

Discussion during the annual conference of the International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes (IC MEMO), in the Jewish Museum in Munich, 2015

the reappraisal of regimes of violence on a global scale. The goal is to create a new society in contrast to dictatorships and crimes against humanity, in which, above all, the former victims are given the chance to lead a good life.

Broadly speaking, two questions emerge from the critical examination of the Nazi period as crucial for the comparative evaluation of processes of reappraisal:

Are ALL the groups in the reappraisal process – with all the different possible kinds of persecution they have suffered – recognised by the state and by society? Do they receive concrete and material support to enable them to lead a better life? Is their history being worked through and dealt with in educational processes – including in museums and memorial centres? This is one form of honouring them. At the same time we should adopt a variety of perspectives in looking critically at other groups of people that acted at that time.

The second question – which is far more difficult for a society to work through – is to what extent the perpetrators were brought to account. Is information being provided about the particular types and methods of the crimes, and are the perpetrators being prevented from continuing to organise?

My study of criminal regimes until now unfortunately leads me to conclude that it was always the people who were victims of state crimes who had major problems in the successor societies. It is often the case that, at the very most, a small group of them managed to achieve participation in social and political power. It is also often the case that only a small layer of perpetrators were sentenced and ostracised, while the structures of protection continue to operate.

This is not a pessimistic view of the reappraisal of history – but it is a realistic one. After all, on the one hand it means that memorial museums cannot do the work alone and cannot create better human beings – as public opinion often demands or expects. Instead, these transformation processes must be achieved in cooperation with many institutions, particularly in the international sphere.

On the other hand, I am convinced that memorial museums are indispensable. They can make an important contribution by continually reminding us of the need to consider the victims of the history and honour them. The “witnesses in stone”, the memorial museums, offer particularly good preconditions for this.

As we know, history is always conceived in relation to the present day. This means that consideration of the victims of the history of the Nazi period always involves a challenge to examine present-day developments. Günter Morsch aptly expressed this at the New Year's reception of the memorial museums in Berlin-Brandenburg as “giving a sharper focus to the historical consciousness of the threats and problems of present-day domestic and foreign policy”.<sup>4</sup>

In any case, international cooperation can be very valuable. It can help by presenting different perspectives and recognising sociopolitical causes and current meanings. The international discourse makes it possible to question one's own viewpoint in a critical way. In particular, internal conflicts in states or binational conflicts, which always result from past crimes, are most likely to be resolved on a factual, negotiable level with international assistance. But this only applies when the respective country is willing to accept it.

The panel discussion was edited for publication by Angelika Königseder.



Director Ivo Pejakovic elucidates the Jasenovac Memorial Centre in Croatia during an international seminar trip with participants from the region and from Germany, 2016

Uwe Bergmeier has worked in East Africa for many years on the topic of memorial work in dealing with civil conflict and transformation. From 2009 to 2018 he was the Program Coordinator of Civil Peace Service in Kenya, Association for Development Cooperation (AGEH), Cologne, Germany. He is currently based in Kenya and works as head of the Misereor liaison office for Southern Sudan.

Professor Dr. Carol Gluck is a professor of modern Japanese history at Columbia University in New York City. Carol Gluck is a founding member and the present chair of Columbia's Committee on Global Thought.

Dr. Alexander Hasgall is a historian and wrote his doctoral thesis on recognition processes in relation to the last military dictatorship in Argentina. He has worked as a human rights observer in Central America and coordinated a European network for combating anti-Semitism. He has been head of the Council for Doctoral Education of the European University Association since the autumn of 2017.

Dr. Angelika Königseder works as a freelance historian, editor and curator in Berlin.

- 1 NIOD: Institute voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies in Amsterdam.
- 2 Until 2013 it was called the "Task Force for international Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research".
- 3 The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a notorious rebel group, has been militarily active for over 30 years in Northern Uganda (until 2006) and in the surrounding countries against the Museveni government. It recruits child soldiers by extremely brutal methods and carries out raids on the local population.
- 4 Günter Morsch: Grußwort zum Neujahrsempfang des Arbeitskreises der Berlin-Brandenburgischen NS-GEDENKSTÄTTEN (Blog: guenter-morsch.de [2.3.2018]) / Opening address to the Working Group of the Berlin-Brandenburg Memorials of the Nazi period on 2 February 2018.

# Memorial Museums Seminars and Conferences

	Event		Organisers
	<b>Memorial Museum Seminars</b>		<i>Events organised by Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (ARPS), in cooperation with:</i>
1983 Oct	"The Past is Not Forgotten ..." – Memorial Museum Work in the Federal Republic of Germany	Hannover	The "White Rose" Leisure and Educational Centre; Federal Agency for Civic Education (BpB)
1984 April	Resistance and Persecution 1933–1945. What are the lessons for today?	Berlin	German Resistance Memorial Center, Berlin; Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES)
1984 Nov	The Status of Jewish History and the Persecution of the Jews in the Work of Memorial Museums	Essen	Old Synagogue Essen; FES
1985 May	Nazi Ideology and Neonazism – Their Meaning for Memorial Museum Work	Wewelsburg	Wewelsburg District Museum; FES
1985 Nov	Memorial Museum Work in East and West: How can History be Communicated to Young People?	Berlin	Protestant Academy Berlin
1986 May	Remembering the History in the Present Day – On Topical Issues of Memorial Museum Education	Breitenau	Breitenau Memorial Museum; Protestant Academy Hofgeismar; FES
1986 Nov	Local Memorial Museums – National Monument	Bonn	"At The Synagogue" Association, Bonn; BpB; Youth Academy Walberberg/Bornheim
1987 June	"Annihilation Through Work" – The Forced Labour of Concentration Camp Prisoners and Their Meaning for the Work of Memorial Museums Today	Salzgitter	Arbeitskreis Stadtgeschichte, Salzgitter; FES
1987 Oct	The Acceptance of Memorial Museums for the Victims of the Nazi Regime in the Federal Republic of Germany	Flossenbürg	Association of the former Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB
1988 May	Memorial Museums – Glorification or Clarification? On the Specificities of Memorial Museum Educational Programmes	Neuengamme	Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB
1988 Dec	Letting Victims and Opponents of the Nazi Regime Speak – Work with Historical Eyewitnesses	Mörfelden	German Resistance Research Council, Frankfurt; BpB
1989 June	Study Centres for Contemporary History – Museum and/or Memorial Centre?	Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf Memorial to the Victims of the Nazi Regime; BpB; FES
1989 Oct	Fascination and Violence	Nuremberg	Educational Institute Nuremberg; FES
1990 May	Youth Opposition and its Suppression	Papenburg	Action Society DIZ Emslandlager: BpB
1990 Nov	Hadamar – Site of extermination of people labelled "unworthy to live" in the Nazi regime, and present-day memorial museum	Hadamar	Hadamar Memorial; State Welfare Association Hesse; BpB
1991 April	History of the Former Concentration Camps after 1945	Bergen	Lower Saxony State Agency for Civic Education; Working Group (Arbeitsgemeinschaft) Bergen-Belsen
1991 Dec	Perpetrators – Victims – Memorial Museums	Oranienburg	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
1992 May	Factory Relocations at the End of the Second World War and the Impact on the Prisoners	Blankenburg	Mittelbau–Dora Concentration Camp Memorial/ Buchenwald and Mittelbau–Dora Memorials Foundation (BMDF); Langenstein–Zwieberge Concentration Camp Memorial; FES
1992 Dec	Art and Remembrance – New Approaches	Breitenau	Breitenau Memorial Museum; Hesse State Agency for Civic Education (HLZ)
			<i>Events organised by the Topography of Terror in cooperation with:</i>

	<b>Event</b>		<b>Organisers</b>
1993 June	Prisoners of War and Victims of Wehrmacht Justice – History and Reception in Memorial Museum Work	Torgau	Saxon Memorial Museums Foundation (StSG); Documentation and Information Centre Torgau; FES
1993 Oct	Theresienstadt (Terezin) Ghetto – The State of Research	Terezin	Terezin Memorial; Terezin Initiative Institute; FES
1994 June	Memorial Museum Work – The Buchenwald Example	Weimar	Buchenwald Memorial/BMDF; FES
1994 Nov	Between Controlled Decay and Theatrical Staging: Ravensbrück Memorial as an Example of the Future Design of Memorial Museums	Fürstenberg	Ravensbrück Memorial Museum/ Brandenburg Memorials Foundation (StBG); BpB
1995 May	"Not a single day is forgotten, and nor are the nights" – Women in Concentration Camps	Tutzing	Protestant Academy Tutzing, Forum for Young Adults; Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site; International Youth Meeting Dachau
1995 Oct	The "Authentic Place" and its Design – The Example of Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum	Oranienburg	Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum/ StBG; FES
1996 May	Are 50 Years of Remembrance Enough? – The Future of Memorial Museums in Germany	Kirchheim/HE	BpB; HLZ
1996 Oct	Educational Work in Memorial Museums	Hamburg	Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial; Rissen Protestant Centre; FES
1997 May	War of Annihilation and Genocide – the Presentation in the German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst	Berlin	German-Russian Museum Berlin-Karlshorst; Gegen Vergessen – Für Demokratie Association (GV-FD); FES
1997 Oct	Crimes of Nazism and Stalinism at the Same Location	Dresden	Saxon Memorial Foundation
1998 May	Dealing with Sites of Jewish History – Remembrance and Reappraisal	Bad Urach	Baden-Württemberg Agency for Civic Education (Ipb); Working Group of Memorial Museums and Initiatives in Baden-Württemberg
1998 Oct	The SS, Economics and Concentration Camps in the Last Stage of the War – The Example of Mittelbau-Dora	Nordhausen	Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp Memorial/ BMDF; BpB
1999 June	Evacuation and Liberation – The Museum of the Death March (Below Forest/Wittstock)	Flecken Zechlin	Museum of the Death March in Below Forest (Branch of Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum); German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) Youth Education Institute, Flecken Zechlin
1999 Nov	Didactic Approaches to Historical Sites – The Example of Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial	Dachau	Dachau Youth Guest House; Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB; Bavarian Agency for Civic Education
2000 June	Memorial Museums – Society – Memory	Schwerin	Political Memorials Mecklenburg-East Pomerania; BpB
2000 Nov	Police and Nazi Crimes: Reappraisal and Documentation in the National Socialism Documentation Centre in Cologne	Cologne	NS Documentation Centre of the City of Cologne; BpB; FES
2001 May	The Eastern Province of Westphalia in the Sphere of Conflict between SS Ideology, SS Myths, and Daily Life in the Camps	Wewelsburg	Wewelsburg District Museum; Development Workshop Culture of Remembrance, History in East-Westphalia-Lippe 1933–1945; BpB; FES
2001 Oct	The Persecution of the German Sinti and Roma Population under the Nazi Regime and its Presentation in Memorial Museums	Heidelberg	Documentation and Cultural Centre of German Sinti und Roma; Baden-Württemberg Agency for Civic Education; BpB
2002 May	Orientation through History and Memory? A Conference on Memorial Museum Education with Reference to the Coming Decade	Weimar	Buchenwald Memorial Museum/BMDF; European Youth Education and Meeting Centre Weimar; BpB
2002 Sept	Collecting, Preserving and Documenting as the Basis for Civic Education in Memorial Museums	Flossenbürg	Flossenbürg Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB

	<b>Event</b>		<b>Organisers</b>
2003 May	Memorial Culture from a West European Perspective: The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Germany	Münster	Historical Site Villa ten Hompel, Münster; BpB
2003 Sept	The History of "Asocial Behaviour" in the Nazi Period. Presentation and Communication in Concentration Camp Memorial Museums	Moringen	Moringen Concentration Camp Memorial Museum; Lower Saxony State Agency for Civic Education; BpB
2004 May	Traces of Survival. Documents of Remembrance. Art, Artists and Civic Education in Memorial Museums for the Victims of National Socialism	Dachau	Dachau Youth Guest House; Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB
2004 Sept	Memorial Museum Education	Worms	Rhineland Palatinate Agency for Civic Education (LpB)/ Osthofen Concentration Camp Memorial Museum; Friends Association Projekt Osthofen; Working Group for Memorial Museum Education; BpB
2005 May	Remembering Wartime Imprisonment and Forced Labour in Wehrmacht Camps 1939-1945: From Stalag IX A Ziegenhain to Trutzhain Memorial and Museum	Romrod	Trutzhain Memorial and Museum; HLZ; BpB
2005 Sept	Dealing with the Sites of Nazi Crimes of Violence since 1945. Perspectives of the Culture of Remembrance in Germany	Hamburg	Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB
2006 May	Judicial Crimes and their Reappraisal –The Example of Red Ox Prison in Halle (Saale)	Halle (Saale)	Red Ox Memorial Museum Halle (Saale); BpB
2006 Oct	The Representation of Male and Female Perpetrators in Memorial Museums for Nazi Victims	Berlin	House of the Wannsee-Conference Memorial and Educational Site; BpB
2007 June	Schools and Memorial Museums	Weilburg	Working Group for Memorial Museum Education; HLZ; BpB
2007 Sept	Concepts and Goals – Planning and Realisation. A Comparative Study of the Founding Phases of the Concentration Camps	Oranienburg	Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum/StBG; BpB
2008 May	Forced Labour in the Concentration Camps	Nordhausen	Mittelbau-Dora Concentration Camp Memorial; BpB
2008 Sept	The Submarine Bunker Valentin – Navy Armaments and Forced Labour	Bremen	Bremen Agency for Civic Education; Lower Saxony Memorial Foundation; BpB
2009 June	Nazi "Euthanasia" Murders – Historical Contexts, the Grafeneck Example, Reappraisal	Bad Urach	Grafeneck Memorial Museum; Baden-Württemberg Agency for Civic Education; BpB
2009 Sept	The Presentation of Victims of Nazi Persecution in Exhibitions and the Educational Work of Memorial Museums	Bergen	Bergen-Belsen Memorial; Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation; GV-FD; BpB
2010 May	The History of Police Detention Camps – The Example of Hinzert SS Special Camp/ Concentration Camp and its Reappraisal in the Memorial Museum in Hinzert	Trier	Rhineland Palatinate Agency for Civic Education; The SS Special Camp/Hinzert Concentration Camp Memorial; GV-FD; Catholic Academy Trier
2010 Sept	The Transformation of Contemporary History and Remembrance. Perspectives of Memorial Culture 20 Years after German Unification.	Schwerin	Political Memorials Mecklenburg-East Pomerania; BpB ; GV-FD; BpB
2011 June	Examination of the SS in Research, Educational Work and Media – Development and Perspectives of Research on Perpetrators	Wewelsburg	Wewelsburg District Museum; GV-FD; BpB
2011 Oct	Focus on the Visitor. Educational Work with Adults in Memorial Museums	Georgsmarienhütte	Augustaschacht Memorial Museum Association; Gestapokeller Memorial Museum Association in Schloss Osnabrück.; Haus Ohrbeck – Catholic Educational Institute; Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation

	<b>Event</b>		<b>Organisers</b>
2012 June	"Don't forget and don't repeat" – Contemporary Relevance in the Educational Work of Memorial Museums	Berlin	Working Group of Museums Education; House of the Wannsee-Conference Memorial and Educational Site; BpB
2013 June	Memorial Museums and New Media	Weimar	Buchenwald Memorial; Buchenwald Memorial Endowment Association; European Youth Education and Meeting Centre Weimar; BpB
2014 June	Memorial Museum Archives and Collections: Challenges – Possible Solutions – Practical Examples (working title)	Bad Urach	Concentration Camp Memorial Museum Oberer Kuhberg Ulm, Documentation Centre Association; Baden-Württemberg Agency for Civic Education; BpB
2015 June	70 Years after the Liberation of the Concentration Camps – What Can the Memorial Centres Achieve?	Dachau	Max Mannheimer Study Centre at Dachau; Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial; Working Group for Museum Education; BpB
2016 June	Between Clarifying and Making Meaningful? The Specific Character of Documentation Centres as Locations for the Study of Nazi History – The Example of the Nuremberg Nazi Party Rally Grounds	Nuremberg	Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds; Memorium Nuremberg Trials; BpB
2017 June	Exhibition Narratives and Educational Work on the Nazi Perpetrators	Oranienburg	Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum/StBG; BpB
2018 June	Young People in Memorial Museums	Düsseldorf	Düsseldorf Memorial Museum; Working Group for Museum Education; BpB
	<b>Memorial Museum Conferences</b>		<i>Events organised by the Topography of Terror Foundation, in cooperation with:</i>
2012 Nov	The Present and Future of Memorial Museums for the Victims of the Nazi Regime in Germany: A Standpoint	Hanover	Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials funded by the German Government and the Federal German States (Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials); Working Group of the Memorial Museums and Sites of Remembrance from the Nazi Period in North-Rhine Westphalia; Ahlem Memorial Museum/Hanover region
2013 Sept	Developments, Tendencies and Problems of a Memorial Culture in Germany – The Position of the Memorial Museums for Victims of the Nazis	Worms	Osthofen Concentration Camp Memorial/Rhineland Palatinate Centre for National Socialist Documentation; Rhineland Palatinate Agency for Civic Education; Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials
2014 Sept	3rd Nationwide Conference of Memorial Museums in Germany	Bremen	Bremen Agency for Civic Education, Submarine Bunker "Valentin" (Denkort Bunker "Valentin"); Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials; Representation of the Federal German State Associations of Memorial Museums and Initiatives
2015 Dec	4th Nationwide Conference of Memorial Museums in Germany	Kiel	Commissioner for Civic Education in Schleswig-Holstein; Working Group of Memorial Museums and Sites of Remembrance in Schleswig-Holstein; Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials
2016 Dec	Research in Memorial Museums – Taking Stock and Considering Improvements	Cologne	Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials; FORUM of Federal State Working Groups of Memorial Museums, Sites of Remembrance and Initiatives (FORUM); North Rhine-Westphalia Agency for Civic Education; NS Documentation Centre of the City of Cologne
2017 Dec	Educational Work in Memorial Museums – Challenges, Opportunities and Areas of Conflict	Halle (Saale)	Saxony-Anhalt Memorials Foundation/Red Ox Memorial Museum Halle (Saale); Saxony-Anhalt Agency for Civic Education; Working Group of Concentration Camp Memorials; FORUM

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Topography of Terror Foundation  
Niederkirchnerstraße 8  
10963 Berlin, Germany  
Tel. +49 (0) 30 254509-15  
Fax +49 (0) 30 254509-33  
lutz@topographie.de  
www.topographie.de



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