



The Bergen-Belsen Memorial
in cooperation with Fortunoff Video Archive
for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University

ORGANIZATION

Conductors Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten
Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen
PD Dr. Habbo Knoch
Celle/Göttingen
habbo.knoch@stiftung-ng.de

Prof. Dr. Henri Lustiger-Thaler
New York/Paris
lustigerthaler@aol.com

In cooperation with Dr. Joanne Rudof
(Fortunoff Archives, Yale University)

Administration Stephanie Billib, Michael Pechel,
Heike Rudolph, Beatrice Walendy
(Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten)
Phone: + 49 (0) 5141-93 355-0
e-Mail: anmeldung-sngds@web.de

Stiftung niedersächsische Gedenkstätten
Geschäftsstelle:
Welfenallee 32
D-29225 Celle
Phone: + 49 (0) 5141-93 355-0
Fax: + 49 (0) 5141-93 355-33
info@stiftung-ng.de
www.stiftung-ng.de
www.bergen-belsen.de

Seats are limited. Participation requires confirmation.
Reservation asked for until December 20, 2008 by e-Mail.
Fee: € 25,- excl. Dinners, to be paid at the conference.
Participants (except those invited) have to book hotels on
their own. Travel costs cannot be covered. Transfers from
Celle to Bergen-Belsen will be offered. Detailed information
and final program will be send out January 2009.

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The Bergen-Belsen International Conference January 10 - 13, 2009

WITNESSING: SITES OF DESTRUCTION AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE HOLOCAUST

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CONCEPT

In October 2007, a new museum opened at the historical site of Bergen-Belsen. Within the new exhibition, sources of individual witnessing figure prominently, in particular the use of rich interview materials, witness accounts and other personal testimonies.

What particular kinds of ethical and theoretical problems are encountered in a discussion of memory and witnessing at sites of destruction? The conference will bring together scholars who address the problem of witnessing and the representation of Nazi crimes within memorial museums at historical sites of the genocide.

What kind of rhetoric or ethic of interpretation is called upon when dealing with these sorts of memorial museums? How can we speak of the surrounding landscape(s) of destruction? What kind of auratic claims to „authenticity“ influence or affect the ways in which the representation of the Holocaust at sites of destruction is theorized and developed?

The conference will raise questions pertaining to the use of testimonies and other memory genres that have come to the foreground of recent discussions and approaches regarding questions of history, representation and subjectivity.

What is the weight of history, and what is its relation to narrativity at a site of destruction? What is contained within an act of witnessing as an intersubjective event of the visitor/viewer at these specific sites? What are the connecting threads between these sites and discussions of Human Rights violations today? How can these difficult yet fertile associations be ethically navigated?

PROGRAM

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10 (BERGEN-BELSEN)

- 6.00 pm **Welcome** (over Dinner Buffet)
Habbo Knoch, Foundation of Memorial Sites in Lower Saxony, Director
- 7.00 - 8.30 pm **Presentation of the New Museum at Bergen-Belsen**

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11 (BERGEN-BELSEN)

- 9.00 - 10.45 am **Guided Tour: Bergen-Belsen as an Historical Site**
- 10.45 - 11.15 am Coffee Break
- 11.15 - 11.30 am **Introduction to the Conference Habbo Knoch, Henri Lustiger-Thaler**
- 11.30 - 1.00 pm **Opening Lecture**
Chair: Geoffrey Hartman (Yale University)
Hans Mommsen (Munich)
Victims and Perpetrators in Holocaust Historiography
- 1.00 - 2.00 pm Lunch
- 2.00 - 4.00 pm **Section I. BEYOND AUTHENTICITY: CAMP SITES AND MEMORIAL CULTURES**
Chair: Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (University of Hannover)
Rainer Schulze (Essex University)
Immediate Images. Narrating the British Discovery of Belsen
Teresa Swiebocka (Auschwitz State Museum)
The Politics of Place. Nazi Camp Sites in Poland
Heidemarie Uhl (Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna)
Symbolic Places. Camp Sites as Landscapes of Memory

- 4.00 - 4.30 pm Coffee Break
- 4.30 - 6.30 pm **Section II. REMEMBERING DESTRUCTION: SOCIAL MEMORY AND PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS**
Chair: David Bankier (Yad Vashem/Hebrew University) (tbc)
Henri Lustiger-Thaler
Holocaust Lists and the Memorial Museum
Insa Eschebach (Ravensbrück Memorial Museum)
Rituals and Iconographies at Concentration Camp Sites
Zoe Waxman (Royal Holloway, University of London)
Words of Pain. Interpreting Personal Memories of the Holocaust

- 8.00 pm Conference Dinner

MONDAY, JANUARY 12 (BERGEN-BELSEN)

- 9.00 - 10.00 am **Key Note Lecture**
Chair: David Marwell (Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York)
Geoffrey Hartman (Yale University)
Holocaust Testimony in a Genocidal Era: Authentic Memory and Commemoration
- 10.00 - 10.30 am Coffee Break
- 10.30 - 12.00 am **Section III. REPRESENTATIONS OF DESTRUCTION: IMAGINING THE PLACE OF THE INDIVIDUAL**
Chair: Henri Lustiger-Thaler
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (New York University)
Overdue Memories. The Jewish Museum at Warsaw
Esther Farbstein (Michlalah Jerusalem College)
Ultra Orthodox Collections of Testimonies: History and Characteristics

- 12.00 - 1.00 pm **Project Report**
Chair: Paul Shapiro (USHMM, Washington)
Pere Patrick Desbois (National Service for Relations with Jews/Yahad in Unum, Paris)
Uncovering Hidden Traces. Mass Graves in Ukraine and Belarus
- 1.00 - 2.00 pm Lunch
- 2.00 - 3.30 pm **Section IV. EXTENDED MEMORY: GENOCIDE MUSEUMS AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION**
Chair: Rainer Schulze (Essex University, UK)
Paul Williams (Ralph Appelbaum Associates, USA)
Remembering Genocides. The Global Rush to Commemorate
Habbo Knoch
Beyond the Individual. Memory and Democracy in Contemporary Politics
- 3.30 - 4.00 pm Coffee Break
- 4.00 - 5.00 pm **Mark Weitzman** (Simon Wiesenthal Center, New York)
The Tolerance Project at the Simon Wiesenthal Centre, New York
Anja Schade (Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen)
Teaching Democracy? Memorial Sites and Human Rights Education in Germany
- 6.00 - 7.00 pm Dinner
- 7.30 - 9.30 pm **Public Panel Discussion (Schloss Celle)**
HISTORICAL SITES, INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONIES AND THE FUTURE OF MEMORIAL MUSEUMS
Chair: Bernd Weisbrod (University of Göttingen)
Participants with Statements:
Geoffrey Hartman, Thomas Lutz, David Marwell, Paul Shapiro

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13 (CELLE/BERGEN-BELSEN)

- 9.00 - 10.00 am **Section V. PERSPECTIVES: MEMORY AND WITNESSING IN THE 21ST CENTURY**
Chair: Joanne Rudof (Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University)
Lawrence Langer (Simmons College, USA)
Deep Memory Revisited. Where Does it Lead Us?
- 10.00 - 10.15 am Coffee Break
- 10.15 - 11.15 am **Chair: Habbo Knoch**
Annette Wiewiorka (Director of Research CNRS, Paris)
Cultures of Witnessing and Memory. Entering the 21st Century
- 11.15 - 12.15 am **Closing Discussion**
Participation of all Conference Speakers and Moderators welcome
- 12.15 - 1.15 pm Lunch (Celle)
- 2.00 pm Tour of the former DP-Camp at Bergen-Hohne
- 4.15 pm Gedenkstätte Bergen-Belsen; Transfer to Celle/Hannover

Conference Program Update

For additional informations see the full programm.

Monday, January 12

10.30-12.30 am

Esther Farbstein (Michlalah Jerusalem College): Ultra Orthodox Collections of Testimonies: History and Characteristics

Michael Elm (Frankfurt University): Historical Authentication through Eyewitness Accounts in German TV-Infotainment

Hans-Ulrich Wagner/Juliane Finger (Hamburg University): Media Witnessing. Reflections on a User-oriented Approach to long-term Media Effects

12.30-1.30 pm: Lunch

1.30-3.30 pm

Paul Williams, Mark Weitzman, Anja Schade (Chair: **Rainer Schulze**)

3.30-4.00 pm: Coffee

4.00-5.00 pm

Lawrence Langer (Chair: **Joanne Rudof**)

6.00-7.00 pm: Dinner (Celle, on invitation)

7.30-9.30

Public Panel Discussion (Chair: **Bernd Weisbrod**)

Introduction: **Habbo Knoch**

Tuesday, January 13

9.00-10.00 am

Pere Patrick Desbois (Chair: **Paul Shapiro**)