

“Only doing my Duty.”

Defining Perpetrators in Relation to State Sanctioned Violence

Friday, 10th October 2014, German Historical Institute London

This workshop is organized by the “Reverberations of the Second World War in Germany and Europe” research group at University College London (directed by Professor Mary Fulbrook and Dr Stephanie Bird) in co-operation with the German Historical Institute London.

The past two decades have seen a notable shift from focusing primarily on the experiences and the suffering of victims of Nazi violence towards a new interest in perpetrators. While most of the academic literature is primarily concerned with motives and circumstances in which violent acts were committed, this workshop comes to the complex subject of perpetration and its aftermath by addressing several distinct dimensions: 1) questions of ethics, morality and terminology, 2) Individual agency and social mobilization, 3) strategies/patterns of (self-) representation in literature, historiography and autobiography and 4) intergenerational transmission.

The first session questions our understanding of the term “perpetrator” and our interpretation of the circumstances and conditions of acts of extreme violence as they emerge in debates in various disciplines. Session two looks at the representation of perpetrators in literary accounts and self- narratives of individuals who were widely considered to be Nazi perpetrators. It also deals with the ways in which the legacy of perpetrators impacts on and is reflected by subsequent generations.

The final session brings together Jens-Jürgen Ventski and Naomi Tadmor. They will speak about their family histories and about ways of coping with the past for members of the second generation of victims and perpetrators alike.

Thursday, 9th October; venue: Garwood Lecture Theatre at UCL

19:00: Public Film Viewing

Public evening film viewing of *Garage Olimpo (Olympic Garage; Argentina 1999)*, followed by joint discussion

The film is introduced by Claire Lindsay (UCL)

Friday, 10th October; venue: German Historical Institute London

09:30 Opening and welcome

Introduction

09:45 – 10:15

Mary Fulbrook, UCL

Session 1: What is a perpetrator? Interpretations and self-understandings

10:15 – 11:30

Tim Beasley-Murray (UCL): “‘Tout comprendre, c’est tout pardonner’: Reflections on the ethics of the representation of and research into perpetrators”

Nicolas Berg (Leipzig): “‘Bureaucratic Imagination’ – Raul Hilberg's key concept in the historical discourse after 1945”

11:30 – 12:00 tea break

12:00 – 1:15

Iris Wachsmuth (Berlin): “Gender relations as crime alliances and their moral implications in narratives of female perpetrators”

Imke Hansen (Uppsala): “‘And he was one of us’ – Perceptions of local collaboration and complicity in Belarus and Ukraine”

1:15 – 2:15 lunch

2:15 – 3:30

Session 2: Representations and Transmissions

Felix Römer (German Historical Institute London): “Perpetrators among themselves: Perceptions of violence in conversations between German POWs, 1944-45”

Stephanie Bird (UCL): “Calling the Mass Murderer to account: Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones* and the fantasy of justice”

3:45- 5:00

Ismee Tames (Amsterdam): “Dutch Nazi-collaborators and their families after the war”

Katharina von Kellenbach (Maryland): “The father’s house: Prodigal sons, obedient sons, lost sons”

5:00 – 5:30 tea break

5:30- 7:30

Session 3: Family Histories

Jens-Jürgen Ventski (Zell am See): “We called it Litzmannstadt” – A German family story”

Naomi Tadmor (Lancaster): “Family memorialisation: 1939-2014”

Registration and further information:

Scholars working in the field are welcome to attend the workshop after registration with Dr Julia Wagner (j.wagner@ucl.ac.uk) & Dr Christiane Wienand (c.wienand@ucl.ac.uk).

Please note that the registration closes on Friday, 26th of September 2014.

The film viewing (9th of October, 19:00 at UCL) and the final session (10th of October, 17:30 at the German Historical Institute) are also open to the public. Due to limited number of seats, **registration is also necessary** for these public events under the email addresses named above. Registration for the public events closes on Friday, 3rd of October 2014.

This workshop is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the UCL European Institute, the UCL School of European Languages and Cultures and the German Historical Institute London.