

CONFERENCE

Genealogies of Memory in Central and Eastern Europe Theories and Methods

Warsaw, November 23-25, 2011

CALL FOR PAPERS

Organizers:

European Network Remembrance and Solidarity

Institute of Sociology, University of Warsaw

Institute of Sociology, Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities

European representations of the last century have been largely shaped by a Western perspective. This also applies to the realm of academic study of social memory. The purpose of this conference is to reflect on the methodology and the state of memory research in Central and Eastern Europe. This region entered the twentieth century with unresolved social problems engendered by belated modernisation and profound ethnic and religious divisions. It suffered not only two world wars but also experienced genocide, border changes, population resettlements, and political and economic experiments on a scale unseen in the Western part of the continent. Moreover, it entered the global order only at the close of the twentieth century. We hope to establish the relevance of the studies on memory in Central and Eastern Europe for memory research in other parts of the world. We would also like to sketch a map of European research schools on memory, with a particular reference to theoretical proposals which either originated in Central and Eastern Europe or are used to study the memory of this region. Scholars from various disciplines are welcome to join the debate on the history of memory.

The conference will address the following issues:

The specific nature of Central and Eastern Europe's historical experience. In this section we ask whether there was any twentieth century historical experience which could be defined as a common experience for the countries of the region. What historical events and traditions may bind the societies of Central and Eastern Europe into communities of memory, even if they remain internally conflicted? What was the influence of various ethnic groups and the specifics of nation building process on shaping memories in the region? Then, are the theoretical concepts and research methods developed by scholars from outside the region adequate for conveying the specificity— if such exists — of Central and Eastern Europe?

Research categories. In this part we concentrate on the methodology of memory research. The terminology used in the global literature on memory is rich and varied. References to the past are classified into such categories of memory as: collective, cultural, national, public, official and others. While in one context the term “public memory” may seem adequate, in another one an opposition between historical policy and vernacular memory may seem more appropriate. Methodologies also differ regarding the media of memory under consideration. In this respect, memory may be defined e.g. as an action or a text. Both institutions and individuals may be regarded as agents of memory. Memory often occurs immediately alongside – or is superseded by – other concepts such as trauma, forgetting, myth and tradition. And lastly, why do we speak of memory and not of history when considering how the past exists in the present? In the most general sense, what theories should we explore and what institutions and media of memory should we examine in order to render the phenomenon of addressing the past in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe?

Research themes, techniques and data collections. In this part we ask scholars of various disciplines e.g. sociologists, historians, literature specialists and others studying Central and Eastern Europe to present their research methods and techniques. We are interested in studies on memory from Germany to Russia, from Estonia to Bulgaria. There will also be a place to discuss both the practice and the practitioners of commemoration: historical policy and its makers as well as museums and other institutions collecting visual documentation and oral history.

Professor Aleida Assmann (University of Konstanz) will give the keynote address.

Languages of the conference: English preferred, Polish or German possible.

Abstracts: Please send an abstract of your paper of **no more than 300 words** and short biographical information by **July, 1, 2011**. You will be asked to submit your final conference paper by **November, 1**, so we could circulate it to the commentators.

Please send your abstracts and all inquiries to: genealogies@enrs.eu

Publication of selected papers in a peer-reviewed journal is planned.

A limited number of travel and accommodation refunds for younger scholars and doctoral students is available. There is no conference fee.

The organizing committee: Maciej Bugajewski, PhD (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań), Burkhard Olschowsky, PhD (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity), Małgorzata Pakier, PhD (Warsaw School of Social Sciences and Humanities), prof. Jan Rydel (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity), Joanna Wawrzyniak, PhD (University of Warsaw).

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