

## Call for Papers

### Conference to mark the 80th anniversary of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, Dec. 6 to 8, 2021 in Oranienburg

When visiting a memorial site in 2015, the German President Joachim Gauck said that the millions of Soviet prisoners of war who died in German captivity between 1941 and 1945 were "in a kind of memory shadow" as far as collective memory is concerned. The inhumane treatment of these prisoners of war points to the larger context of the German war of annihilation against "Jewish Bolshevism". It also highlights the desire for a future "Lebensraum" in the East designed according to National Socialist ideas, which has likewise hardly come into focus.

The Sachsenhausen Memorial, the Institute of History at the University of Klagenfurt, the Center for Holocaust Studies at the Institute of Contemporary History, and the Federal Agency for Civic Education are therefore organizing a conference to mark the 80th anniversary of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union. This conference will take stock of research to date while providing broad scope to new research perspectives, especially social-historical ones, discuss questions of historical-political education and mediation, and also aims to provide impetus for remembrance culture. It offers the opportunity, in particular, to bring German, Russian, and other Eastern European researchers into closer dialogue. Contributions in the English language are also welcome.

There are three main focus areas:

#### **Violence and Destruction**

The first main focus area will be devoted in particular to the violent German occupation on the ground and the Holocaust at a regional level. It will also concentrate on violence towards and extermination of Soviet citizens in the German Reich territory and other territories occupied by German troops. In addition, the focus will be on up to now forgotten groups of victims in the war of annihilation such as the Roma, victims of "gang fighting" or inmates of psychiatric institutions. Contributions on less exposed aspects such as the large-scale use of sexual violence would also be welcome.

## **Societies in a war of annihilation**

This focus area looks at the impact of violence and wars of annihilation on society, particularly in the occupied territories of Eastern Europe. The effects of regime changes and violent experiences were particularly marked at a local level. What affects did the German occupiers have on local society (changes in local power structures, but also propaganda, occupation press, etc.)? What role did Stalinism and previous repressions play in the Soviet Union in day to day life under occupation? Contributions that focus both on the destruction of local societies and the changes in elites brought about by the occupiers are just as conceivable as those that deal with forms of collaboration and resistance. Contributions are also welcome that examine how the war of annihilation changed society in the "Altreich ". This was already structured according to anti-Semitic and racist criteria, in view of the prisoners of war and "Eastern workers" brought there and also the notorious maternity homes for "Eastern workers". Contributions on the armed forces and their reception, on the Wehrmacht as well as the Red Army, and also on how they were perceived, are also welcome. This relates to the leadership of the troops as well as the everyday life of ordinary soldiers, women's perspectives in the armed forces or those of Jewish fighters. More recent studies on Soviet partisans could also be integrated into this subject area.

## **Remembrance**

The focus will be on remembrance practices of the Holocaust and the war of annihilation, where there was often a tense relationship between state-controlled memorial policy and practice. Those who visit the Jewish Museum in Moscow will learn that many Jewish communities erected memorials, where the Star of David later became a Red Star. All in all, it is not only the change or the persistence of enemy images in the context of the Cold War that is significant, but also the increasingly antagonistic culture of remembrance following the collapse of the Soviet hegemony into different national cultures of remembrance, as in the Baltic States or Ukraine. Again, local studies are of interest here, which can show a relevance to the present day. One aspect could, for example, be tensions between the memory of victims of Stalinist repression and victims of National Socialism, which came to light after the end of the Soviet Union.

We are planning 20-minute lectures and ask for applications with a short CV and a summary (max. 300 words) describing the topic and its innovative character. Please also outline the central findings and the key research sources and submit by 29 March 2021. We plan to publish the contributions.

Should you have any further questions please contact:

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