Shaping and experiencing cultural memory
Dealing with the Nazi- and GDR dictatorships in Berlin
4th to 8th May 2015 in Berlin

Program overview
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Remembrance and memory
4th May 2015

How collectively dealing with the past is organized and shaped has a strong impact on individual memory and on how cultural memory is lived by a society. The first day of the seminar aims at familiarizing the participants with the meaning of cultural memory, politics of remembrance and memorial pedagogy. Together we will discuss which stages a society-wide process of dealing with the past can go through and who initiates and organizes such a process. A special emphasis will be put on the interplay of different societal spheres such as politics, the justice system, the media and the economy as well as divides between them and sources of renewed conflict.

9.00 am – 12.30 pm  Introduction
Cornelia Brinkmann, Katharina Waczek, Steps for Peace

In the morning we will focus on getting to know all participants and their expectations for the seminar. We will give room for exchange about the backgrounds of the participants as well as their experiences with conflict, dealing with the past and cultural memory.

2.00 – 5.00 pm  „Politics of history, cultural memory and public history in Germany“
Hanno Hochmuth, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam

Through a lecture and subsequent discussion core concepts such as cultural memory, politics of remembrance and memorial pedagogy are elaborated. Questions will be identified guiding the following visits to the memorial sites throughout the week. Hanno Hochmuth will give insights into the process of dealing with the past in Germany and the development of German cultural memory including societal debates and conflicts.

Location: to be announced
Contemporary history research and cultural memory
5th May 2015

It is crucial for a sustainable process of transformation to reveal and address past crimes. Uncovering the truth, recognizing the victims and honoring role models of resistance are prerequisites for strengthening civil society. Scientific research, preserving documents and publications play a central role in this respect.

9.00 – 11.00 am  German Resistance Memorial Center

Since 1989, the German Resistance Memorial Center’s permanent exhibition has been a central site of remembrance in Germany, providing extensive documentation of the motives, aims, and forms of the fight against the National Socialist dictatorship. It is located in the Bendler Block in Berlin’s Mitte district, at the historic site of the attempted coup of July 20, 1944. The research unit within the Memorial Center develops independent research projects on the history of resistance and supports other historians through conferences, exhibitions, lectures and publications (www.gdw-berlin.de).

Location: German Resistance Memorial Center, Stauffenbergstrasse 13 – 14, 10785 Berlin-Mitte (entrance through the courtyard)

2.00 – 4.00 pm  Stasi Archives

The archives of the GDR Ministry of State Security (Stasi) are responsible for the safekeeping, utilization and accessibility of all records (1950 - 1990) of the secret police. One of the main tasks of the archives is to make the records accessible to citizens and to research and media institutions. The archives regularly present documents and the human destinies tied to them (www.bstu.bund.de).

Location: BStU archives, Ruschestraße 103, 10365 Berlin, entrance through house 7

5.00 pm  Discussion with German Members of Parliament

We will discuss with German Parliamentarians about the role and responsibility of politics in shaping cultural memory in Germany.
History as an argument for learning
6th May 2015

Places of historic and civic education can be open spaces of learning, where people grapple with the past and with their personal understanding of history. Ideally these places also have a preventative effect by sensitizing visitors for the threat of totalitarian systems and ideologies and for current structures of injustice.

10.00 am – 1.00 pm  
**Topography of Terror Documentation Center**

Between 1933 and 1945, the central institutions of Nazi persecution and terror – the Secret State Police Office with its own “house prison,” the leadership of the SS and, during the Second World War, the Reich Security Main Office – were located on the present-day grounds of the Topography of Terror. The permanent exhibition focuses on the central institutions of the SS and police during the “Third Reich” and the crimes that they committed throughout Europe. A pedagogue from the documentation center will guide us through the exhibition and exemplify approaches of memorial pedagogics and work with groups (www.topographie.de).

Location: Topography of Terror Documentation Center, Niederkirchnerstrasse 8, 10963 Berlin

3.00 – 4.30 pm  
**The Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial**

The site of the main remand prison for people detained by the former East German Ministry of State Security (Stasi) has been a Memorial since 1994. It is tasked with researching the history of the Hohenschönhausen prison between 1945 and 1989, supplying information via exhibitions, events and publications, and encouraging a critical awareness of the methods and consequences of political persecution and suppression in the communist dictatorship. The former Stasi remand prison is also intended to provide insight into the workings of the GDR’s political justice system. The tour of the prison is led by a former inmate or a historian (www.stiftung-hsh.de).

Location: Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial, Genslerstrasse 66, 13055 Berlin
Facing history at places of remembrance  
7th May 2015

Memorial sites are built in order not to forget and not to repeat past injustice. Their task and concern is to preserve the memory of committed crimes at authentic places and to create spaces where survivors can commemorate their relatives. They are also faced with the challenge of making connections to the present. What can be learned at historic places, what can be accomplished by memorials sites and what are their limitations?

10.00 am – 12.00 pm  **Berlin Wall Memorial**

The Berlin Wall Memorial is the central memorial site of German division, located in the middle of the capital. Situated at the historic site on Bernauer Strasse, it extends along 1.4 kilometers of the former border strip. The memorial contains the last piece of Berlin Wall with the preserved grounds behind it and is thus able to convey an impression of how the border fortifications developed until the end of the 1980s. The events that took place here together with the preserved historical remnants and traces of border obstacles on display help to make the history of Germany's division comprehensible to visitors ([www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de](http://www.berliner-mauer-gedenkstaette.de)).

Location: Berlin Wall Memorial, Bernauer Strasse 111, 13355 Berlin

1.00 – 3.30 pm  **Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe**

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in the center of Berlin is the German Holocaust Memorial honoring and remembering the up to six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Located between the Brandenburg Gate and Potsdamer Platz, the Memorial consists of the Field of Stelae designed by Peter Eisenman and the subterranean Information Center. The exhibition at the Information Center documents the persecution and extermination of European Jewry as well as the historic sites of the crimes ([www.stiftung-denkmal.de](http://www.stiftung-denkmal.de)).

Location: Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Cora-Berliner Str. 1, 10117 Berlin
Places of Remembrance - Memorial in the Bavarian Quarter

“Places of Remembrance” is a decentralized memorial in the Bavarian Quarter in the Schöneberg district of Berlin, which was inaugurated in 1993. Eighty brightly printed signs are put up on lampposts, depicting colorful images on the one side and condensed versions of anti-Jewish Nazi rules and regulations passed between 1933 and 1945 in black and white on the reverse side. Together, the words and images force passers-by to remember the almost-forgotten history of this neighborhood, where Albert Einstein and Hannah Arendt once lived. Dispersed throughout the area the memorial becomes a metaphor of the daily deprivation of rights and humiliation of Jews during the Nazi era (www.stih-schnock.de/remembrance).

Location: Bavarian Quarter in Berlin-Schöneberg
Building a bridge to the present with cultural memory
8th May 2015

The last seminar day aims at reflecting on and systematizing experiences and impressions as well as integrating them in the participants’ own context. The 8th May 2015 is the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Germany – a day that has been described by former German President Richard von Weizsäcker as “a day of liberation”. This day of remembrance offers participants the unique opportunity to visit diverse memorial events in Berlin and to round off the seminar Shaping and experiencing cultural memory with a lively impression of cultural memory that keeps past injustice alive and tangible.

9.00 am – 3.30 pm  Analyzing and transferring new insights
Cornelia Brinkmann, Katharina Waczek, Steps for Peace

The participants discuss what they have learned about the different dimensions of cultural memory and dealing with the past throughout the week. They have the opportunity to present their new ideas and plans and to receive collegial feedback.

From 3.30 pm  8th May: ceremoniously commemorating history

In Berlin this day will be commemorated differently by public and private initiatives. The city offers countless opportunities to experience how memory is currently lived. The following selection will be added to in the next months:

„May ’45 – Spring in Berlin“
Kulturprojekte plans an open-air-exhibition in Berlin’s urban space, a discovery tour by the Berliner Unterwelten e.V. and a program of guided tours set up specifically for children and young people by the Museumsdienst Berlin (www.kulturprojekte-berlin.de).

Peace Festival 2015
The festival offers a diverse educational and motivational program as well as performance artists from all over the world. The festival adheres to the principles of non-violence and the joy about the diversity of religions and generations (www.friedensfestival.org).

Museum Festival 2015 at the German-Russian Museum Karlshorst
On 8th May the museum opens its doors and its garden until late in the evening with a multifaceted program and the traditional “toast to peace” at 10 pm in the historic surrender room (www.museum-karlshorst.de).