**Mastering Hitler – Outside Views:**

**Continuities and discontinuities of functional elites in Germany from the 1920s to the 1970s and its recent historical research discourse in international perspective**

International Conference
4 – 6 October 2023, University of Zurich

Over the past two decades historical research in Germany on questions of “Coming to terms with the past“, i.e. the legacy and impact of National Socialist rule, has focused on the question of continuities and discontinuities of elite groups in politics, ministerial bureaucracy, administration, parliamentary institutions, diplomatic services, medical profession, judiciary and many others, incl. e.g. the development from the Reichsbank to the Bundesbank, from the SS and Gestapo to the West German Intelligence Services.

These research projects have produced a wide variety of publications, most of which are only available in the German language. They provide a plethora of new knowledge and insights into the way in which people at certain positions in German institutions developed their worldview and their actions from the late 1920s through the Third Reich to the Federal Republic. Yet, there has been little attention so far towards the “view from outside“ both during this period (the 1920s to the 1970s) as well as part of the historiographical discourse which shaped the topics of contemporary history over the past two decades.

The conference shall address this void and broaden the international perspectives. First it shall look at how Germany‘s “coming to terms with the past“ and the role of the functional elites in the period after 1945 was viewed, perceived and discussed in other countries during that period. While there has been considerable research on the views of the Western allies, little is known about discourse in many other countries. The conference seeks to identify the present state of our knowledge and is open for suggestions to learn about research on countries which may have not been in the focus so far.

The conference shall also put the research development and results of the past two decades into an international historiographical perspective. We would like to invite scholars from all areas which are interested in German historiography to participate in the evaluation of how these research projects fit into the general development of Germany‘s coming to terms with the past over the past seven decades.

Aim is to link the rather German-focused discourse over the past years to an international discourse which shall function as a bridge between the German-speaking and the English-speaking world. The conference is organized by: Magnus Brechtken, Władysław Bułhak, Mikael Nilsson, Tobias Straumann, and Thomas Wegener Friis.

**Conference program**

**Day 1: Wednesday 4 October 2023**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 12.00h  | Meet & Greet |
| 13.00h | Welcome & Introduction |
| 13.30 – 15.00h | Panel 1: ***Cold War Contexts*****Michał Turski:** Polish secret police and the west German research on the Eastern Europe during Cold War **Nils Abraham**: History as an Instrument in the Cold War – The use of the coming to terms with the NS-past in GDR‘s foreign policy towards Sweden **Jasmin Söhner**: An alleged war criminal as head of the specialized war crimes investigation unit? A case of Soviet misunderstanding and instrumentalisation of West German Vergangenheitsbewältigung**Moderator: Mikael Nilsson** |
| 15.00 – 15.30h | Coffee Break |
| 15.30 – 17.00h | Panel 2: ***Culture in context*****Anna G. Piotrowka**: Film music composers in NS Germany and their after WWII afterlives**Katherine Quinlan-Flatter**: Forbidden Art **Moderator: Elena Bös** |
| 18.00-19.30h | Keynote: **Kerstin von Lingen** |
| 20.00h | Conference Dinner or Informal Get Together |

**Day 2: Thursday 5 October 2023**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9.00-11.00h | Panel 3: ***Judicial perspectives*****Henrik Lundtofte**: Post-war trials and Continuity – some Danish perspectives**Paweł Kosiński**: Government of the General Government – a criminal organization. A stop on the way to the scaffold..., or to a further career.**Krzysztof** **Persak**: “The Fourth Reich”: Thomas Harlan’s pioneering project on former Nazis in the West German elite versus the Communist authorities in Poland**Moderator: Thomas Wegener Friis** |
| 11.00-11.30h | Coffee Break |
| 11.30-13.00h | Panel 4: ***Global perspectives*****Vandana Joshi**: War, Diplomacy and Memory: The Value of British-Indian POWs in Mastering Hitler’s Past**Matías Grinchpun**: ¿Una nueva Alemania? (Contrasting) Perceptions of postwar Germany in Peronist Argentina, 1945-55**Moderator: Magnus Brechtken** |
| 13.00-15.00h | Lunch Break |
| 15.00-17.30h | Panel 5: ***Media and historiography*****Norman Domeier**: „Typewriter Perpetrators“. Continuities in the international careers of Nazi journalists after 1945 **Peter Thaler**: Externalizing the Past: Postwar Austria and the History of the Third Reich**Wojciech** **Wichert**: Historikerstreit 1986/1987 in the Polish scientific and journalistic perception**Moritz Schramm**: “Seduced by the Great Führer”? Reception of Albert Speer and his post-1945 career in Denmark**Moderator: Tobias Straumann** |
| 19.00h | Informal Get Together |

**Day 3: Friday 6 October 2023**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9.00-11.30 | Panel 6: ***Individuals & the general perspective*****Viktoria Sukovata**: Legacy of V. Klemperer and Perceptions of German Political Philosophy in Soviet and post-Soviet times**Jacek Tebinka**: The case of SS-Gruppenführer Heinz Reinefarth. From serving the Third Reich to career in West Germany**Jacek Jędrysiak**: "All the Nazi Generations" - Commanding Staff of the Bundeswehr in the 1960s in the Light of Documents of the Polish People's Army (based on Materials from Military Districts)**Moderator: Władysław Bułhak** |
| 11.30-12.00h | Coffee Break |
| 12.00-13.00h | Panel Discussion |
| 13.00 | End of Conference |