

Syllabus

Course title: Use and Misuse of the Holocaust

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General Description:

There has been huge debate going on over the question whether the holocaust is unique event, as far as its essence and not the numbers of the causalities is concerned, or rather mass killing similar to other mass killings which took place in the 20th century.

The question arises whether the parties engaged in this debate are indeed motivated by the will to explore the Holocaust or rather by political or non-objective motivations. In other words, the question is about instrumentalism of the Holocaust, of the mass killing, for purpose other than trying to reveal the truth.

The most extreme examples are the Holocaust-deniers such as historians David Irving, Paul Rassinier, and David Hoggan. But also the Historikerstreit (historians' quarrel) and claims about the Holocaust as the narrative of the victors (Ernst Nolte, Andreas Hilgrubber) as well as claims made by Tom Segev and Norman Finklestein about the instrumentalism of the Holocaust raise serious concerns about use and misuse of the Holocaust, falsification and underestimating.

Objectives:

There is no other theme discussed and studied such as the Holocaust. Likewise, there is no other historical event which has ever been subject to such a huge debate about the authenticity of the reports about it, about its documentation, and even about its existence. In this course we'll first of all become acquainted with different attitudes toward the Holocaust and with attempt to use it to political purposes. Secondly, we'll discuss the dangers and impacts on our life in overlooking, underestimating and falsifying the holocaust.

Weekly topics and readings

Week 1: Introduction

Text:

- Hannah Arendt (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

Week 2-6: Holocaust denials

Texts:

- Paul Rassinier (1964). *The Drama of the European Jews*
- Arthur Butz (1976). *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century: The Case Against the Presumed Extermination of European Jewry*
- David Irving (1977). *Hitler's War*
- David Hoggan (1969). *The Myth of the Six Million*

Week 7-11: The Historians' Quarrel

Texts:

- Jerry Muller (1989). *German Historians At War*
- Rudolf Augstein (ed) (1993). *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? : Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy Concerning the Singularity of the Holocaust*
- Peter Baldwin (1990). *Hitler, the Holocaust and the Historians Dispute*
- Ian Kershaw (1989). *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretations*

Week 12-14: Use and Misuse of the Holocaust

Texts:

- Tom Segev (1993). *The Sevent Million*
- Norman Finklestein (2000). *The Holocaust Industry*