



Press Invitation

Bonn/Berlin, 21.1.2009

Perpetrator Research in a Global Context: Second International Conference on Holocaust Research

The Minister of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany, Wolfgang Schäuble, will open the second International Conference on Holocaust Research, hosted by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb) from January 27 to 29, 2009 in Berlin / What makes someone become a perpetrator? Discussions with Richard Overy, Peter Longerich and Harald Welzer

From January 27 to 29, 2009 the second International Conference on Holocaust Research will take place in Berlin, hosted by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb), the Holocaust Research Centre at Royal Holloway, University of London and the Essen Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities. The conference will be addressing the most recent conclusions and perceptions in perpetrator research. Until only a few years ago, the organisers of the Holocaust were regarded but through a single lens: they were pathologised, demonised and criminalised. Today's perspectives on perpetrators are more differentiated. More recent research has made it increasingly clear that the search for one or more homogeneous perpetrator 'types' is a flawed approach. The variety of social milieus, age groups and educational backgrounds of Holocaust perpetrators is too wide to allow such a pursuit.

„Why do perpetrators act the way they do?“ – this is one of the central questions according to the Minister of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany, Wolfgang Schäuble, who is to open the conference on January 27th. „We must learn from history and need to take to heart the answers to this question“, Schäuble says. „What we need are new approaches to enable people to appreciate themselves and others and to feel part of a democratic society whose main value is not exclusion but respect.“

„The change of perspective on perpetrators is of great significance“, says Thomas Krüger, President of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (bpb). „This change shows once again that the critical perception of social developments and political frameworks needs to be sharpened. We, the bpb, therefore take it as our responsibility to make the insights of perpetrator research accessible for civic education.“

The conference will approach the subject of perpetrators from a number of scientific angles, including social psychology, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and history. In addition to five such interdisciplinary panels with internationally renowned experts, various workshops will illustrate ways of implementing academic conclusions into citizenship education and into curricular and extra-curricular education and activities as well as into work related to memorials, intercultural education and the arts.

The conference is directed at teachers, journalists, academics and students. The conference will be held in English. German interpreters will be on hand and available in all five panels.

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The conference „Perpetrator Research in a Global Context“ – an overview:

Date: January 27 to 29, 2009

Location: Berlin, dbb-Forum Berlin, Friedrichstraße 169/170 (Mitte)

Conference opening: January 27, 5:30 pm. Participation at the Conference Opening is free of charge.

Contributions by: Richard Overy (Exeter), Harald Welzer (Essen), Dan Stone (London), David Silberklang (Jerusalem), Peter Longerich (London), Marie-Janine Calic (München) and others

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