

Justice beyond the Iron Curtain: Nazis, Local Collaborators, and Jews on Trial in Poland, Germany, and the USSR, 1940s-1970s

This panel is dedicated to the memory of Professor Alexander Victor Prusin, who passed away on 13 August 2018.

The history of post-Holocaust justice remains developing terrain, especially for lesser-known trials connected to Eastern Europe. After the publication of Prusin's and Finder's ground-breaking work, *Justice behind the Iron Curtain* (2018), we find it necessary to explore the topic further. Our panel will add to the scholarship pioneered by professors Finder and Prusin a nuanced approach to the political aspects of justice in the Soviet realm, namely the Lithuanian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan Soviet Republics, Poland, and East Germany.

The scholars gathered here all approach postwar trials from two perspectives. First, that of the courts, examining political and ideological motivations for juridical action as well as the legal frameworks of the different judiciaries. Second, that of survivors, highlighting their activities in the trials, the experiences they voiced, and examining aspects such as attempts to process trauma within the judicial sphere and the urge to produce knowledge on crimes otherwise overlooked. These perspectives frame what was thought to be a period of silence as a period of multiple occasions to speak about trauma and genocide.

Two papers will discuss how state courts adjudicated the problem of "Jewish collaboration" after the war, contrasting the Soviet Union with Germany. Two papers will discuss how Nazi crimes were investigated in the states that have been formerly occupied by Germany and are now communist regimes in alliance with the Soviet Union. This will create an opportunity to discuss similar and contrasting aspects of the trials of Nazis, local collaborators, and Jews.

While the majority of Holocaust trials took place within national judicial frameworks, far more scholarly attention has been dedicated to the large international courts such as the Nuremberg tribunal. Shifting their attention to examples of the former category, the presenters hope to improve understanding of post-Holocaust justice as a long-term, widespread process never explored as a whole before. Our analysis spans from the 1940s to the 1970s, which has been described as a period of "silence." Arguing against this description, the research presented here demonstrates the continuity of action towards the prosecution of war crimes and the commemoration of victims throughout this period. Overall, the panel will demonstrate the directions in the research of Holocaust-related trials and the methodological turn that will likely continue and result in more excellent scholarship.