

Holocaust Remembrance Day in the Periphery: Cosmopolitan Memory Politics and National Translations

Efforts of governments and civic institutions to commemorate the Holocaust have intensified exponentially since the turn of the century. As a consequence of diverse but converging transnational initiatives, countries around the world have gradually introduced an annual Holocaust Remembrance Day (HRD) on January 27th. These new, supra-national forms of commemoration are conceived as the ritualized expression of a global community of values and responsibility. But they are also accompanied by contradictions and intrinsic ambiguities. How is the Holocaust understood, contextualized and rendered meaningful in national contexts that have a marginal connection to the history of World War II and the Nazi genocide? Is Holocaust remembrance discursively linked to other events, particularly to local histories and legacies of genocide and political violence? What is the role of the nation-state in a field of memory that is increasingly cosmopolitan, where the authority of the nation state to determine discourses about its past has progressively diminished?

Our panel includes the most recent research focusing on the interplay of the universalist, cosmopolitan politics of Holocaust remembrance with national legitimization profiles and internal dynamics of specific memory cultures. The case studies represent countries that were neutral during WWII; have progressively integrated into the international network of Holocaust remembrance and education; and most are also immersed in debates revisiting their historical narratives regarding genocide, war and massive human rights violations. Presentations illustrate the dialogical interactions, struggles for recognition, and intercultural dynamics that occur on the platform provided by Holocaust Remembrance Day initiatives.