

2. Berliner Colloquium zur Zeitgeschichte

**World of the Camps. Exclusion, Social Control, and Violence  
in Transnational Perspective**

International Conference

Convenors: Christoph Jahr (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg),

Alan Kramer, Claudia Siebrecht (both Trinity College Dublin)

und Jens Thiel (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

Conference languages: German and English

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**Program**

**Session 1 Historical Preconditions and Antecedents**

Camps are generally considered to be an invention of »classical modernity« of the period around 1900. However, certain thought patterns, plans, and some institutional forms of detention and disciplining were already recognizable in the *Sattelzeit* around 1800; the key ideas, which came above all from the Enlightenment, reappeared in modified form in the later imagined world of camps: modern labor training, the postulate of utility, or the identification of entire population groups as »the enemy within«. To which degree may these developments be seen in the context of colonial expansion?

**Andreas Gestrich:** Pre-modern Preconditions and Antecedents **Hugh Gough:**

Exclusion, the Enemy Within and External Threat: France 1793 Dittmar

Dahlmann: Russia in the 19th Century: *Katorga*, Political Prisoners, and

Resettlement of Objectionable Population **Daniel Marc Segesser:** Camp and

Law—Law in the Camps: A Legal-historical Perspective on the Detention of  
Prisoners of War and Civilians from the Age of Enlightenment to the Present

Chair: **Bernd Greiner**

## Session 2 The Emergence of the Camps from the »Spirit of Colonialism«?

Around 1900, concentration camps for the mass internment of civilians and combatants were established in four colonial theatres of war: Cuba (Spain), the Philippines (USA), South Africa (Britain), and South-West Africa (Germany). The camps had clearly defined confines, usually barbed wire. While earlier models of colonial expansion had attempted to keep undesired groups of the indigenous population at a distance, unless they were intended for economic exploitation, now objectionable population groups which resisted colonial occupation were to be kept directly under control in camps. Selection for internment usually followed ethnic criteria. Each of the cases under investigation reflects transnational encounters of a particularly dramatic kind, which could end in mass death or even in intentional genocide. The camps had long-term repercussions both for the oppressed peoples as well as for the colonial powers.

**Andreas Stucki:** Departure into an Age of Camps? Forced Relocation and Deportation of the Spanish Antiguerrilla in Cuba, 1868-98 **Claudia Siebrecht:** The Colonial Camps of the USA, Britain, and Germany **Jürgen Zimmerer:** Camps and Genocide from Windhoek to Auschwitz

Chair: **Martin Baumeister**

### **Keynote Lecture by Richard Overy** **The Concentration Camp: An International Perspective**

The German concentration camp system remains at the center of any discussion of the nature and function of camps established for political and social-political purposes. Yet the German camps were one example among many and the German system was smaller than the less well-documented camp structure established in the Soviet Union. Camps were a common phenomenon in wartime and inter-war Europe. This suggests that it is possible to analyze some of their generic features and to suggest broader conclusions about why so many countries used concentration camps as institutions of highly coercive exclusion or punishment. Comparative or transnational analysis permits interplay between the political, ideological, and social circumstances that shaped the development of a particular camp system and the broader systemic factors, derived from the ambiguous

relationship between modernity and mass politics, which made the camp a European-wide phenomenon.

Chair: **Claudia Siebrecht**

### **Session 3 Camps in the First World War: Prisoners of War, Refugees, Civilian Internees, and Forced Laborers**

In war the unleashing of violence always affects not only soldiers, but also civilians. For many reasons the latter are compelled to leave their homes as a consequence of fighting and occupation, whether temporarily or permanently. Their next destination is not infrequently a camp. As early as in the First World War camps functioned as if it were self-evident to accommodate, detain, and »concentrate« prisoners of war and civilians. Increasingly, economic interests played an important role, especially for the war economy.

**Jens Thiel, Christian Westerhoff:** Forced Labor Camps in Germany and its Occupied Territories in World War I **Matthew Stibbe:** International and Transnational Dimensions of Civilian Internment during the First World War **Hannes Leidinger:** Refugee Camps in Eastern Europe. A first Assessment **Heather Jones:** Prisoner of War Camps: An Analytic Comparison

Chair: **Thomas Sandkühler**

### **Session 4 The Empire Strikes Back: Camps after 1918**

While camps before 1918 had been established exclusively during wars, the First World War marked a turning point. Even after the last prisoners of war had returned home in 1920, camps were established to intern civilians. In democratic Germany this was not only to detain migrants, but also in the context of youth welfare and youth education, and for the purpose of »racial improvement« (»völkischer Aufbau«) in the eastern borderlands. In Nazi Germany camps were built as sites of terror, but also as institutions to create the »people's community« (»Volksgemeinschaft«), and to form the new elite. In the Soviet Union camps were likewise built for the purpose of repression of political and ethnic enemies, but also to create the »new Soviet human being«.

**Jochen Oltmer:** Camps as Instruments of Control for the Migratory Consequences of War in Europe after 1918 **Nik Wachsmann:** Before Auschwitz: The History of the Nazi Concentration Camps, 1933-39 **Wladislaw Hedeler:** Cadre School Solovki

Chair: **Christoph Jahr**

### **Session 5    Functional Shifts in Camps before and during the Second World War, Part I**

The shift in function proceeded through radicalization of the camps as sites of repression and extermination. The occidental process of rationalization as a narrative of human progress turned, as Max Weber feared, into its opposite, into the totalization of social control through rational bureaucracies. Here the range of functions of the camps becomes evident by investigating the relationship between educative camps, camps for labor service, internment, forced labor, and extermination.

**Meinhard Stark:** A Soviet »Corrective Labor Camp« 1930-1945. Origin and Change—The Example: The Karaganda Corrective Labor Camp in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic **Marc Buggeln:** Forms of Unfree Labor in the Nazi Camp Systems; **Javier Rodrigo:** Fascist Camps for a Civil War. Spain, 1936-1947

Chair: **Alan Kramer**

#### **Panel Discussion**

**Camps in the 20th Century—Challenge and Responsibility for Scholars, Mediators, and Educators**

with **Wolfgang Benz, Geoffrey Megargee and Claudia Weber**

Chair: **Jens Thiel**

## Section 6    **Functional Shifts in Camps Before and During the Second World War, Part II**

**Christoph Jahr:** Civilian Internment Camps in the Second World War **Michael**

**Wildt:** Shifts in Function of Concentration Camps under the Nazi Order

**Chungki Song:** Allied Civilians in the Japanese Internment Camps 1941-1945: A  
Survey

Chair: **Gerhard Hirschfeld**

## Session 7    **Camps since 1945**

After 1945 camps were used to process refugees and »Displaced Persons«. The camps in post-fascist and democratic states—about which little research has been published—were established for political repression of perceived enemies and to secure territory in colonial wars (Algeria, Kenya, Indonesia), or also in peacetime as places to collect refugees who were considered politically unreliable. To the present day camps have been used by both authoritarian and democratic states, as with the extra-legal internment of suspects.

**Juliane Wetzel:** Camps for Jewish »Displaced Persons« in Germany after 1945

**Bettina Greiner:** Soviet Special Camps in Germany—Incarceration after the  
Second World War (1945-1950) **Moritz Feichtinger:** »Concentration Camps« or

»New Villages«—Functions and Representations of Strategic Resettlements in  
French and British Late Colonial Wars **Bernd Greiner:** Guantanamo as a Case in  
Point. The »War on Terror« and its Camps

Chair: **Michael Wildt**

Final Discussion und Commentary: **Alan Kramer**

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