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# Embedding the Apology in the Media: How Civil Society Contributes to Reconciliation

International Workshop on Media and Civil Society  
Research Cluster on Asian Civil Society  
Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne

27 March 2019



# Programme

<b>Date:</b>	27 March 2019	<b>Time:</b>	12:00 – 19:00
<b>Venue:</b>	Yasuko Hiraoka Myer Room - Level 1 - Sidney Myer Asia Centre - The University of Melbourne Parkville VIC 3010		
<b>Registration:</b>	go.unimelb.edu.au/x4ax		
<b>Enquiries:</b>	Claudia Astarita - claudia.astarita@unimelb.edu.au		

<b>12:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Registration &amp; Light Lunch</b>
12:30 – 12:45	<b>Prof Akihiro Ogawa</b> – The University of Melbourne Opening remarks
12:45 – 13:20	<b>Civil Society and Reconciliation. Voices from Post-War Japan, Germany and Italy</b> Documentary screening
13:20 – 14:00	<b>Dr Claudia Astarita</b> – Documentary Q&A Session
<b>14:00 – 14:15</b>	<b>Break</b>
14:15 – 14:35	<b>Dr Christoph Classen</b> – Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam Suppressed, kept discreetly silent or morally exaggerated? - Coming to terms with the Nazi-Past in West-German media after 1945
14:35 – 14:55	<b>Prof Riccardo Brizzi</b> – Bologna University The memory of fascism in Italian Cinema
14:55 – 15:15	<b>Prof Allan Patience</b> – The University of Melbourne No apology or faux apology? The consequences for Japan's security as China rises
15:15 – 15:35	<b>Dr Claudia Astarita</b> – The University of Melbourne How younger generations understand history: new trends in Germany and Italy
15:35 – 15:55	<b>Q&amp;A session</b>
<b>16:00 – 16:30</b>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b>
16:30 – 16:50	<b>Prof Jane Munro</b> – The University of Melbourne Can a national apology be meaningful? Assessing the social problems and real impacts of Japanese and Australian national apologies
16:50 – 17:10	<b>Dr Laura Fontana</b> – Comune di Rimini - Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris Italy and the memories of the Holocaust: the Auschwitz paradox. From the myth of innocence to a selective remembrance
17:10 – 17:30	<b>Dr Sow Keat Tok &amp; Dr Delia Lin</b> – The University of Melbourne Remembering the War: Thematic Comparisons of War Museums in China and Japan and their Implications on China-Japan Relations
17:30 – 17:50	<b>Dr Juliane Wetzel</b> – Centre for Research on Antisemitism, Technical University Berlin Germany after the II World War: How Memory and Apology have been Understood in Schools and Within National Civil Society
17:50 – 18:20	<b>Q&amp;A session</b>
18:20 – 18:40	<b>Prof Akihiro Ogawa</b> – The University of Melbourne Closing remarks
<b>18:40 – 19:00</b>	<b>Drinks</b>

## Titles and Abstract

### **Suppressed, kept discreetly silent or morally exaggerated? - Coming to terms with the Nazi-Past in West-German media after 1945**

Dr Christoph Classen

*Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam*

In 1983, the conservative philosopher Hermann Lübbe made a widely acclaimed speech in Berlin on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the seizure of power by the National Socialists. In contrast to many other conservatives at the time, he did not deny that the public discussion of Nazi crimes in West Germany in the post-war period was extremely low. However, he claimed that this was a deliberate process necessary for the reconciliation of society. The article attempts to sketch an overview of the covering of the crimes in West German media after 1945. It tends to produce opposite results: Only the media addressing and scandalization, especially since the 1960s, has created a lasting awareness of the dimension of crime, on which the contemporary consensus on memory politics in Germany is based.

### **The memory of fascism in Italian Cinema**

Prof Riccardo Brizzi

*Bologna University*

This paper examines cinema's role in constructing memories and representations of Fascist Italy, in order to analyze how they have accompanied the evolution of the political system and the Italian society from the tragedy of war to the end of the so-called "First Republic" in 1992-1993. Over the period considered, the number of films about Fascism (from different genres: historical reconstruction, comedy, drama, etc) were not excessively high compared to the totality of national production but, at the same time, relevant compared to what German or French Cinema have done about Nazi Germany or the Vichy regime. Italian cinema since 1945 has both reflected and influenced popular representations of Fascism. This mediatic interaction with Fascist past has been however erratic: after the great (but very short) season of Neorealism, which makes the most of the chapter of anti-fascism, fascism and Resistance disappeared from Italian screens until the beginning of the Sixties. In the early Sixties, in conjunction with the birth of the center-left governments (based on the alliance between Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party), cinema played an important role in reactivating the Resistance and Anti-fascist values. The interest of the Italian cinema for the Fascist period remained constant until the end of the Seventies, during the whole phase of the so-called "Anni di Piombo" ("Years of Lead"). Since the Eighties, the difficulties of the film industry associated with the crisis of ideologies and the collapse of the Italian political system have led to a slackening of this cinematic confrontation with the fascist past.

### **No apology or faux apology? The consequences for Japan's security as China rises**

Prof Allan Patience

*The University of Melbourne*

At the end of World War II, the Japanese were absorbed into Washington's Cold War strategies, which included containing the Soviet Union and communist China. This encouraged Japan's conservative political leaders to face down Asian (especially Chinese) critics of their country's conduct during the cruel years of the Pacific War. In East and Southeast Asia memories of Japan's war crimes have hardly faded as the years have progressed. For example, for the two Koreas, the issue of "comfort women" has never been adequately addressed. Memories of the savagery of Japanese soldiers during the Nanjing Massacre in 1937 remain alive in China, while in Japan they are swept under the carpet. Meanwhile, right wing Prime Ministers in Japan have paid ceremonial visits to the Imperial Shrine of Yasukuni, the controversially ultra-nationalist sanctuary in which the souls of war criminals are still honoured. Although some ambiguously worded apologies have been proffered by the Japanese over the years, they are widely perceived as lacking substance. However, changes are afoot. China's rise is being accompanied by an America seemingly in retreat, if not decline. At the same time Japan's population is ageing and shrinking, its economy is flat-lining. As Beijing continues to flex its muscles, Tokyo is being forced to re-think its security strategies. So far it has not seen the need to

revise its faux apology approach to its Asia Pacific neighbours. To persist with this purblind policy is likely to become seriously problematic for Japan's security as the "Asian Century" gathers momentum.

## **How younger generations understand history: new trends in Germany and Italy**

Dr Claudia Astarita

*The University of Melbourne*

More and more surveys, in America and Europe, are highlighting the emergence and consolidation of critical gaps both in awareness of basic facts as well as detailed knowledge of the Holocaust. In particular, the Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Study, commissioned by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany and released in April 2018, has revealed a shocking reality: a significant majority of American adults believe that fewer people care about the Holocaust today than they used to, and more than half of Americans think that the Holocaust could happen again. At the same time, there is a broad-based consensus that schools must be responsible for providing comprehensive Holocaust education and that a bigger effort is needed to make sure that the younger generation continue remembering and condemning the tragedies of the Second World War. This paper illustrates the results emerged from a broad survey conducted in Germany and Italy involving an average of 700 students per country to show how the Holocaust is understood, remembered and studied in Europe. This research also offers the opportunity to analyse the cases of Germany, Italy and the United States on a comparable dataset.

## **Can a national apology be meaningful? Assessing the social problems and real impacts of Japanese and Australian national apologies**

Prof Jane Munro

*The University of Melbourne*

This paper argues that reconciliation with former enemies after a war is unlikely to be supported by the entire civil society in a country or a group, even after symbolic official apologies have been made and some compensatory actions have been taken. Approaches to history and memory can play a limited role in changing knowledge and perception, as also can media and storytelling. This cautionary approach is formed on the basis of several international comparisons: the much-discussed Japanese efforts at official apology; the much-vaunted German efforts and actions; and the Australian parliamentary apologies, specifically the 2008 apology for the stolen generations. Recognition or failure to recognise past wrongs by other national entities and empires such as the USA and Britain present some useful comparative information. Material factors in geopolitics can change the interactions between former enemy nations even without an active process of reconciliation. International regimes may not be the optimal structure to encourage reconciliation and consolidate stability. Efforts to change attitudes with public information and awareness programs can make a difference; it is possible that with the gradual effluxion of time through many generations, past enmities may be forgotten. In the shorter term, say, a 50 to 80year period, stages of apparent reconciliation followed by outbursts of bad memory are common. Their occurrence can be linked to other factors such as economic relationships. Media can play a role, but its reach and reliability are limited.

## **Italy and the memories of the Holocaust: the Auschwitz paradox. From the myth of innocence to a selective remembrance**

Dr Laura Fontana

*Comune di Rimini - Mémorial de la Shoah, Paris*

According to the world ranking of number of visitors carried out by the Auschwitz Museum, Italy consistently holds one of the top positions. This is mainly thanks to the phenomenon of the Memorial Trains, which have taken on unmatched dimensions in Europe since 2002. It is an initiative fuelled by good intentions, idealism and political activism, which seem to draw strength from a common belief, that has evolved into an unquestionable dogma. People want to learn about history, understand it and draw moral lessons for the present. The method considered more effective today is an educational group visit to the remains of the Birkenau crematoria. In other words, the dual objective of imparting good instruction on the history of the Holocaust and of inducing a sense of responsibility in the

young participants of today is provided by observing the depths of the horror in which humans could directly participate at the site of the catastrophe. However, despite this desire, animated by the best intentions, no national museum dedicated to the Holocaust (although three are now being planned) yet exists in Italy nor does a documentation centre on the crimes of Fascism. Moreover, little is known about the important locations related to the persecution of Jews in the peninsula and, as a consequence, they are rarely visited. These places include Ferramonti di Tarsia in the Calabria region, the largest internment camp under the Mussolini regime and Fossoli di Carpi, one of the main transit camps from which over a third of Italian Jews (including Primo Levi) were deported to Auschwitz. According to the World Monuments Fund the latter risks closure because of its state of abandonment. The "Auschwitz paradox" which marks the memory of the Italian Holocaust can be summarized in the clear disproportion between the centrality and redundancy that the recollections of this event have occupied in Italian public discussions for at least a quarter of a century. It also includes the partial and selective view that the transmission of this remembrance continues to confirm in the collective consciousness. This tragedy seems to have been inherited as a foreign body in the history of the nation, through the compliance of the Republic of Salò with the Nazi occupiers, rather than being fully attributable to the choices and political responsibilities of the nation itself.

## **Remembering the War: Thematic Comparisons of War Museums in China and Japan and their Implications on China-Japan Relations**

Dr Sow Keat Tok & Dr Delia Lin

*The University of Melbourne*

Abstract: The rise of China, and the relative decline of Japan, in recent decades has brought the two countries' historical issues back to the fore. In China, Xi Jinping has been on a roll to "reforming" China's and the CCP's historical accounts through massive investments into public campaigns to mould narratives and memories about China's history. Likewise in Japan, Shinzo Abe has drummed up the nationalist rhetoric following perceptive shifts in its security environment. With these two regional powers increasingly standing off along nationalist lines, the focus falls on their most contentious historical issue: the Sino-Japanese War, 1931-1945. Meanwhile, public spaces, such as war museums, both in China and Japan continue to perpetuate national narratives and provide instructions for public consumption. The themes that emerged from these venues become instrumental in the imagination of the nation and of the "others"—all important factors when we consider the narrowing politics of identity in Northeast Asia. This paper compares the themes of four museums: the Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance against Japanese Aggression (Beijing) and the Nanjing Massacre Museum in China, and the Yasukuni Shrine (Tokyo) and the Hiroshima Peace Park (Hiroshima) in Japan. The main objective is to uncover which aspects of history the narratives (in the forms of words, displays and multimedia materials) emphasise, how they emphasise, and the tensions that ensue. The paper compares the themes of four war-related museums in China and Japan to uncover the different emphases (in the forms of words, displays and multimedia materials), methodologies, and their relationships with the interstate tensions that ensue.

## **Germany after the II World War: How Memory and Apology have been Understood in Schools and Within National Civil Society**

Dr Juliane Wetzel

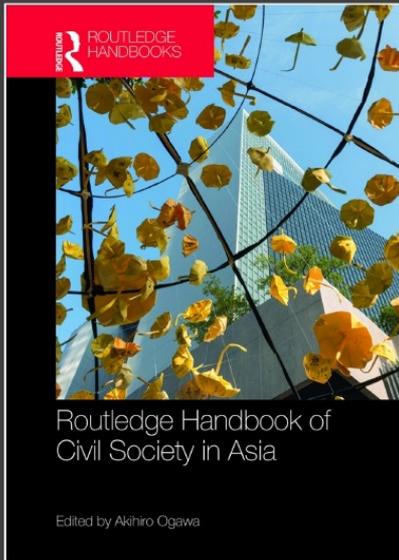
*Centre for Research on Antisemitism, Technical University Berlin*

After World War II the Allies believed that they could free the Germans from "Nationalism and Militarism"— thus the phrasing of the law passed in March 1946 by the National Council in the U.S. Zone— by means of the war crimes trials and denazification. The majority of the German population considered the chapter of their joint responsibility closed after the end of these processes. In the first years following the end of the war, resentment against Jews was rarely expressed in public, given the presence of the occupying power. Antisemitism generally remained latent. But antisemitic attacks since 1945 mostly targeting Jewish memorials and symbols showed that to a certain extent this latency could also become virulent. That is, rather the targeting individuals for personal attack, the perpetrators sought to destroy Jewish life by means of removing the historical memory of Nazi persecution. In 1959 the desecration of a synagogue in Cologne caused over 400 threats against Jewish cemeteries and institutions – limited not only to the Western part of Germany but also effected the Eastern part. In the Federal Republic this caused positive reactions on

a pedagogical level. A change in education has taken place which was even more effected by the protests of the 1968 generation and the revolts against the parent generation and the establishment who insistently kept silent about the Third Reich. A fundamental rethinking in the educational field has taken place after the American TV-movie "Holocaust" was transmitted in Germany in 1979. In recent years there is a boom of Holocaust and National socialism related German documentary films, movies and doku-soaps. The attention they got and the media reaction giving the impression that these films finally explain the Holocaust and National socialism left historians a little bit perplexed. Some of the films and the following media coverage suggested that those films and documentaries showed new, never researched parts of the history or that they would transmit the historical truth - which is not the case. People were attracted by the stories and storm into the cinemas. The same occurred with some TV transmissions, which had a high percentage of viewers. Hundreds of books, endless historical researches and exhibitions on the Holocaust and the National socialist period obviously have had no greater influence – but one-sided books as the one by Daniel Goldhagen or films had and still have an enormous impact in public. But all this is not only negative - such events also push debates and lead to know perspectives the public would never gain from research books. Experts on pedagogical issues recently pointed on the possibility that the knowledge about the Holocaust might also have a positive impact on youngsters with migrant background. Skills about the German past might be an important tool on the way to integration. National socialism and the genocide of the European Jews is not only an historical period but it influences current interior policy as much as foreign policy, is still an ongoing process in courts (Ghetto pensions as well as payments from social assurances for work in the DP camps) and has an impact on today's public discourse in Germany. After all, debating the Holocaust and its impact on the European Jews in multicultural classes could create a greater awareness and sensibility for Holocaust related issues insofar that people who came to Germany because of persecution in their respective countries learn about migration experiences of Jews escaping Nazi persecution. Also, if always an equalization of both experiences has to be evaded the comparison could cause empathy in today's migrant society and serve as an eye opener to deal with the Jewish fate. Nevertheless - generally spoken - it must be clear that knowledge about the Holocaust does not prevent holding antisemitic stereotypes. Though blaming Jews for dominating public discourse with Holocaust related issues does not only serve as a tool to prevent debating German responsibility but it also serves as a platform to transport old antisemitic stereotypes. Sometimes, an equation of Nazi dictatorship and Stalinism creeps into current debates about the Holocaust. Historians compare these two dictatorships for evaluating equal patterns and after all specify the differences. The political scientist Claus Leggewie once formulated: "The difficulty of the European culture of memory is to point on the singularity of the breaking of civilization by the industrially and bureaucratically organized destruction of the European Jews without dogmatically avoid the historical comparison with the systematic extermination of 'class and people enemies' in the Soviet sphere."

## Delegates

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Edited by **Akihiro Ogawa**

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