

Call for Papers and Participants

Bodies and Borders

26th Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Killing Sites

4-10 September 2023, Łódź, Poland

Deadline for applications: 15 January 2023

We invite you to apply to the *26th Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Killing Sites*. The workshop will take place in Łódź, Poland, from 4 to 10 September 2023 and explore “bodies and borders” as analytical categories for the study of the Holocaust, Nazi camps and killing sites.

The *Workshop on the History and Memory of National Socialist Camps and Killing Sites* has been held annually since 1994. This international workshop, organized by and for emerging scholars and Holocaust educators, provides an interdisciplinary and non-hierarchical forum dedicated to research on National Socialist camps and killing sites. In particular, the topics of persecution, forced labor, mass murder and the Holocaust, as well as their representation in various historical cultures, are discussed. The goal is to promote a collective, cooperative, and supportive atmosphere to share and discuss ideas, knowledge, and methodologies in innovative, comparative, and transdisciplinary ways based on a variety of sources. To guarantee low hierarchies during the workshop, the program exclusively invites applicants who do not hold a PhD when they apply (i.e. Ph.D. candidates, MA students, and Holocaust educators). To maintain the workshop’s continuity and sustainability, every candidate is allowed to attend three times: as speaker, participant, and organizer.

On the eve of World War II, Łódź’s Jewish community, numbering around 235,000 members, was the second largest in Europe. In December 1939, local German leaders decided to concentrate the Jews in a specific area of the city. The gates of the newly created Łódź ghetto were sealed in April 1940, locking up nearly 165,000 residents on a surface of 4,13 square kilometers. The history of such an exclusion site interrogates the notion of “borders”: the connections between the ghetto’s inhabitants and the outside world, the relationships between the Jewish *Judenrat* and the German civil and military administration, the deportations to the Chełmno annihilation site, and the presence of Burgenland Roma deportees in the ghetto made this place a dynamic social space where borders were constantly created, transformed, upheld, and trespassed. Yet “bodies” mattered too. Jewish bodies were at the heart of the persecution and destruction process carried out by the Germans. Differences between bodies shaped the victims’ plight: male versus female, young versus old, healthy versus sick. During the workshop, we will analyze the place of the body – in its physical and represented form – in a genocidal context and how borders shaped the lives and actions of victims and perpetrators. We will discuss how Jews and Roma responded to various forms of persecution such as ghettoization, deportation, forced labor, mass

killings, and concentration within the camp system, including thoughtful consideration of supplementary German annihilation practices, namely acute starvation and rampant disease.

The workshop aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the “ghetto” as a complex, geographical, and permeable space of persecution and scrutinize its place in the network of concentration camps and killing sites. Keynotes and guided tours to the former Łódź ghetto, Chełmno, Warsaw, and Piotrków Trybunalski will explore the topics of the workshop and connect them with the local context.

Application

The 26th workshop will bring together emerging scholars and educators who study the meaning of bodies and borders during and after the Holocaust. We welcome papers that explore the history and memory of ghettos, concentration camps, and killing sites and focus on questions, such as:

- How did victims and perpetrators shape, document, and react to intricate spaces of suppression, terror, and deadly violence? How did local, regional, and continental places, spaces, and borders shape the lives, wartime experiences, and postwar accounts of victims and perpetrators?
- How can forensic and archeological methods be used to analyze spatialities and materialities of camps, ghettos, and killing sites?
- How did the perpetrators perceive the material bodies of their victims from its physical exploitation to its concrete destruction? Which historical phenomena, cultural or social models did they rely on? In that regard, eugenics, medical experiments, and body politics in camp societies will be discussed.
- Which role did gender, intimacy, and sexual violence play during the Holocaust?
- How are victims’ or perpetrators’ bodies represented in visual arts, concentration camp literature, and in the spaces of memorials and museums nowadays?

The workshop is not exclusively dedicated to the themes listed above and remains open to a wide array of interests related to the study of the Holocaust including those which place the history of concentration camps, killing sites, and ghettos at the heart of their study. Above all, participation is not restricted to doctoral students only and we strongly encourage early career archivists, Holocaust educators, curators, and museum professionals to submit their proposal to participate in our collective debates in Łódź. We appreciate more open and innovative formats of presentation. We particularly welcome applications from educators, practitioners, and graduate students from underrepresented communities.

• **Speakers** who wish to present their research are requested to submit a short CV and a one-page abstract of their proposed paper (300-500 words).

• **General participant applicants** should submit their CV and a one-page motivation letter (300-500 words) indicating the workshop’s relevance to their research or professional activities and their interest to participate.

All submissions to the workshop should be in a single PDF and emailed directly to workshopscamps2023@gmail.com by 15 January 2023.

The presentations and discussions will be held in English and should not exceed 20 minutes. After the presentations, there will be extensive time for discussion.

We are currently applying for funding to cover the costs for the workshop, as well as the accommodation and travel costs. We are willing to accommodate special needs (e.g., childcare or dietary restrictions) according to our possibilities. We kindly ask all speakers and participants to attend the entire workshop in Łódź. Following the conference, we intend to publish a selection of the papers/projects presented.

For further information on the workshop, please consult our website:

<https://workshopscamps.com>

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact the workshop Organizing Team at workshopscamps2023@gmail.com.

Organizing team

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