



Seminar

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World War II Revisited: Reflecting Continental and Colonial Entanglements

Thursday, 6 November, 4:15 p.m.

In the Thunberg Lecture Hall
SCAS, Linneanum, Thunbergsvägen 2, Uppsala
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S W E D I S H
C O L L E G I U M
for ADVANCED STUDY

ABOUT DAN DINER

Dan Diner received his Ph.D. in International Law at Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main in 1973 and later, in 1980, his habilitation. Afterwards, he has taught at Odense University and Universität Essen, where he was tenured Full Professor at its Dep. of History in 1989. From 1988 to 1999, he served as Professor of History at Tel Aviv University, and from 1994 to 1999, he headed its Minerva Institute for German History and held the Benyamin and Chaya Schapelski Chair of Holocaust Studies. After two years at the Dep. of Political Science at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer Sheva, he took up his current positions at Universität Leipzig in 1999 and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2001. He is a Regular Member of the Philological-Historical Class of the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig.

Diner has been a visiting scholar at numerous research centres, e.g. at Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften, Vienna (1997); Institut für Jüdisch-Christliche Forschung, Universität Luzern; Mansfield College, University of Oxford (2003); the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (2004–05); the Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford University (2008); and the Center for Jewish Studies, Duke University (2011).

Dan Diner was the recipient of the Ernst-Bloch-Preis der Stadt Ludwigshafen in 2006, the 2007 Capalbio Award for his book *Il tempo sospeso: Stasi e crisi nel mondo musulmano* (Milano 2007) and the 2013 Leipziger Wissenschaftspreis. He directs the long-term project ‘Encyclopedia of Jewish European Cultures’ at the Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig and a European Research Council Advanced Grant project, ‘Judging Histories’, based at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Among his more recent publications are *Cataclysms: A History of the Twentieth Century from Europe’s Edge* (Madison 2008), *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley 2000), *Gegenläufige Gedächtnisse: Über Geltung und Wirkung des Holocaust* (Göttingen 2007), *Lost in the Sacred: Why the Muslim World Stood Still* (Princeton 2009), and *Zeitenschwelle: Gegenwartsfragen an die Geschichte* (Munich 2010). His books have been translated into numerous languages.

ABSTRACT

The presentation intends to offer a *narrated* conceptual design of a globalized historical understanding of World War II-memory, and this by interfacing a horizontal (West-East) alignment, traditionally significant for continental European history, with a vertically oriented alignment (North-South) that sheds a colonial and post-colonial perspective on World War II. This constellation tends to lead a posteriori to a realm of conflicting, morally permeated discourses of comparison and analogy, revealing the Holocaust to function as the central event of continental narration, on the one hand, while genocidal atrocities highlight the colonial or post-colonial comprehension, perception and narration, on the other. Methodologically, and in order to offer a fresh and innovative view of the emergence of the specifics of knowledge and meaning in the domain of historical understanding in a globalizing world, while placing the signifying event of the Nazi systematic annihilation of the Jews at the heart of the question of universal historical judgement, the presentation proceeds from the colonial periphery of events, however. This “peripheral”, colonial perspective will in a further seemingly paradoxical turn find itself extended into continental European affairs where it functions to help us comprehend the multiplicity of experiences and the diversity of attendant memories unfolding there. Such a perspective may epistemologically enable us to reconstruct a universally valid understanding of a foundational event in European and global history, namely the recollection of World War II, and thus render possible common judgement while re-determining the meaning of “History”.