

## Emotions and Holocaust Studies

Discussion published by Kobi Kabalek on Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Type:

Workshop

Date:

September 13, 2022 to September 14, 2022

Location:

Germany

Subject Fields:

Holocaust, Genocide, and Memory Studies, Jewish History / Studies, Research and Methodology, Modern European History / Studies

The persecution and murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust provoke various powerful emotions (grief, despair, pain, hope, etc.). These personal sentiments and feelings play a significant role in motivating people to be interested in the Holocaust and are a driving force in fictional representations and academic debates. Yet Holocaust Studies has focused so far primarily on historical facts, structures, and institutions, rather than studying the emotions experienced during and after the events. Scholars who pay attention to emotions, usually explore the role of fear and antisemitic hatred in Nazi propaganda and the rise of antisemitism throughout Europe, but rarely discuss the emotions of victims or the feelings that motivated people to become rescuers or other historical actors.

Recent scholarship on the history of emotions has helped us broaden our understanding of historical events and how they continue to shape our lives. These studies point to the functions of emotions in guiding people's understanding of and reactions to the situations they are in, influencing decision-making processes, contributing to the making and breaking of social relationships, and informing memories and moral orientations. The study of emotions brings to light how feelings shaped the history of Jews and non-Jews during and after the Holocaust; it also reveals cultural and social patterns that continue to affect people's lives today. Such an approach can help us understand the ways in which trauma and loss were integrated into people's lives. This workshop offers a platform to integrate these insights into Holocaust Studies.

We invite original, unpublished, and historically-informed papers from diverse fields and disciplines that research positive and negative emotions during the Holocaust as well as feelings and affections involved in its postwar responses and memories. We are particularly interested in papers that explore one or two emotions (fear, shame,

trust, guilt, grief, love, hate, denial, hope, compassion, belonging, gratitude, revenge, etc.) in relation to different perspectives and situations, for instance, in migration, hiding, rescue, postwar restitution claims, trials, etc. We also welcome papers looking at the emotional significance different places and sites (e.g., synagogues, cemeteries, homes, camps, archives) had for Jewish survivors. We ask participants to reflect on how to detect these emotions and how studying them contributes to our understanding of such topics as survival strategies, mourning and loss, and dealing with dehumanization, and consider which political and social functions they serve and articulate.

Please send abstracts (300 words) by **15 April 2022** to Kobi Kabalek ([kabalek@psu.edu](mailto:kabalek@psu.edu)) and Stefanie Fischer ([s.fischer@tu-berlin.de](mailto:s.fischer@tu-berlin.de)), including a short bio. We will notify you by the **end of May 2022**. Selected presenters will be asked to submit a paper of at least 5-6 pages one week before the workshop. We plan a publication based on a selection of revised conference papers.

The workshop will take place online.

A follow-up in-person event is planned at Goethe University, Frankfurt in early 2023.

Partner Institutions:

Penn State University / Center for Antisemitism Research (TU Berlin) / Buber-Rosenzweig Institute, Fritz-Bauer-Institute / Chair for Research on the History and Impact of the Holocaust (Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main)

Related date:  
April 15, 2022